Swiss Red Cross

Clean, connected.
How a slum raised its resilience.

Evaluation of the Urban Empowerment and Resilience (UER) project in Ershadnagor, Gazipur, Bangladesh

Acronyms

BDRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BL	Baseline
BMC	Block Management Committee
CC	Community cluster
CEA	Community engagement & accountability
CHF	Swiss Franc
CP	Contingency plan
CSO	Civil society organisation
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EL	Endline
FGD	Focus group discussion
GCC	Gazipur City Corporation
HH	Household
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KII	Key informant interview
MRF	Material recovery facility
NGO	Non-government organisation
NRM	Natural resource management
PASSA	Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness
PGI	Protection, gender and inclusion
PNS	Partner National Society
PPS	Probability proportional to size
RC/RC	Red Cross/Red Crescent
RCY	Red Crescent Youth
RRAP	Risk reduction action plan
SDC	Swiss Development Council
SOD	Standing Order on Disasters
SOP	Standard operation procedures
SRC	Swiss Red Cross
SRW	Staff reflection workshop
STS	Secondary transfer station
SWM	Solid waste management
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
V2R	Vulnerability to Resilience
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WDCC	Ward Development Coordination Committee
WDMC	Ward Disaster Management Commitee

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Swiss Red Cross, February 2022

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CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In final version

Introduction

The shrill scream of Arif's whistle cuts through the morning air. Within a few moments, residents appear from all directions, carrying buckets of waste. Arif is a waste collector; this is today's first stop of his designated route. After two minutes, the bottom of his pedal-powered cart is filled, and he moves on to his next stop. In the distance, the whistle sounds again.

Ershadnagor did not always have this routine: back in 2018, when your author first came to this slum to Dhaka's north, there were no whistles. In the absence of a functional waste collection service, people threw their rubbish on the streets. With drainages and alleys littered, typical monsoon rainfalls would leave the area water-logged.

Over tea, a family reports how things have changed. "In the past, our home got flooded at least once per year. In the last two years though, we haven't had any water-logging."

The evaluation of the Urban Empowerment and Resilience (UER) project is a story of change: it shows and analyses how with the help of the project, the people of Ershadnagor raised its resilience.

The title 'clean, connected' alludes to two key achievements. In addition to being cleaner, Ershadnagor has been put on the radar of the Gazipur City Corporation (GCC), the body higher up on the administrative ladder that is in charge of infrastructure, utilities, and much else.

Back in 2018, Ershadnagor had few paved paths. Its main road was dusty in the dry and muddy in the wet. Now, in early 2022, construction workers complete paving the road, which is already lined with elevated sidewalks covering the drainages. Entering the narrow lanes away from the main thoroughfare, construction of new drainages and paths is underway. In one corner of the ward, excavators are busy with earthworks for a new waste facility.

The story of change has many facets that are linked to **resilience**. While 'the ability to anticipate, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of adversity' is a concept that features ubiquitously in project titles and policy frameworks, this notion often remains abstract in practice. Ultimately, it can be viewed from two angles.

From the **outcome angle**, resilience means that a community experiences a comparatively short and shallow downturn after having been affected by a hazard or stressor: damages and losses may be minimal, and the community recovers swiftly (contrast this picture with another community that experiences a deep and prolonged downturn).

From the **functional angle**, we can ask: what features does a community need to display that lead to these reduced downturns and faster recoveries? There has been a lot of discussion in this regard; the initial model by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) that included six 'characteristics' has been updated several times.

In this evaluation, we used ten relevant dimensions for the survey-based resilience radar, thus enabling a neat longitudinal comparison between baseline and endline. For the resilience star (which is based on focus group discussions), we applied the full set of eleven dimensions that are part of current IFRC guidance. Both the resilience radar and the star apply scores for each dimension with values from 0.00 (minimum) to 1.00 (maximum). To give you a sneak preview, we say this much already: the overall resilience score for Ershadnagor went up from 0.53 (medium) to 0.70 (high).

The evaluation is based on a mixed-method design that included resilience radar and star, numerous focus group discussions, key informant interviews, transect walks, and a staff reflection workshop.

Despite an Omicron wave concurrent with the field research, it should be noted that the results of this study are nevertheless robust. Thanks to the excellent preparation of the project team as well as enumerators and facilitators, the evaluation proceeded without significant limitations in terms of research results.

The report is structured in three sections.

Section A provides the background of the UER project and summarises the evaluation approach.

Section B presents the findings, which are structured along the lines of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

Section C looks into the future: it presents lessons from the experiences so far that can be learnt and applied in the remainder of the project implementation and beyond.

A sister report ('Priorities, Partners, Pathways') specifically explores considerations for programming in urban Bangladesh.

SECTION A | **BACKGROUND**

1. Project overview

Driving to Ershadnagor from Dhaka's economic centre of Gulshan, a long line of concrete pylons foreshadow the future. Once completed, the Dhaka Elevated Expressway will link Gazipur with the city centre. Ershadnagor is close to the northern entry ramp for the new toll road.

Ershadnagor is almost as old as Bangladesh: in the early 1970s, people from the countryside started settling here at the northern fringe of the city of Tongi. The land belongs to the National Housing Authority until today. Yet, the slum as been increasingly recognised ('formalised' by the Gazipur City Corporation (GCC). In contrast to more recent informal settlements that are made up of recent migrants, most people in Ershadnagor were born or have been living here for years.

Despite the informal land status, Ershadnagor is bustling with life. Market stalls are filled with produce, many shops line the streets and lanes. In addition to the infrastructure development, some residents are expanding and upgrading their homes. Pointing to the many construction sites in his ward, the ward councillor says not without pride that 'more improvements have happened here in the past three years than in the preceding 47."

Swiss Red Cross (SRC) and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) had first come to Ershadnagor (also knwon as ward 49) in 2016, when they started the Urban Empowerment Project (UEP). In late 2018, SRC and BDRCS started planning for a new project. Focussing on blocks 3,5, and 6, they conducted a baseline that helped shape the new Urban Empowerment and Resilience (UER) project. The project covers 16,000 people across 3,300 households - roughly in the northwestern half of the ward.

The project sought to raise resilience through a three-pronged logic of a) improved protection and preparedness, b) financial and social inclusion, and c) raised capacity of the local BDRCS branch, known as Gazipur District Unit (see figure 1 overleaf).

Notably, the project featured a strong component on solid waste management (SWM). This included the establishment of

a waste collection service, promotion of waste segregation (enabling composting and recycling), and the construction of a so-called Material Recovery Facility (MRF). Drainage cleaning and anti-littering campaigns compounded these efforts as a means to reduce water-logging that had plagued the ward since its formation.

In terms of structures, UER was implemented by a project team that was under the realm of the Gazipur District Unit but functionally independent. The project operated through and in collaboration with community-based entities, namely

- the ward councillor (the elected official of the ward),
- the Ward Development Coordination Committee (WDCC), a group that comprised community representatives as well as the various NGOs and CSOs supporting the ward,
- Block Management Committees (BMC) in the target blocks 3,5, and 6, and
- Community Clusters (CC): in each of these 32 clusters (with around 100 households each), two volunteers were trained in a wide range of topics (waste management, disaster preparedness, safe shelter, social safety nets, health, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The CC volunteers then facilitated bi-weekly neighbourhood sessions.

Critically, the project closely aligned its efforts with the Gazipur City Corporation — working with political leaders and technical administrators to ensure coherence with GCC plans and ownership (notably, the MRF is 50% co-funded by the GCC).

The project team paid great detail to technical quality and carried out several studies to inform its approach. Such studies included an assessment of waste composition (e.g., quantity, organic and moisture content), a survey on social safety net eligibility (the team identified 378 eligible households that enabled the enrolment of 266 households in various government safety net programs), and a study on the economic and social impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (the study led to an add-on recovery project described on page 16).

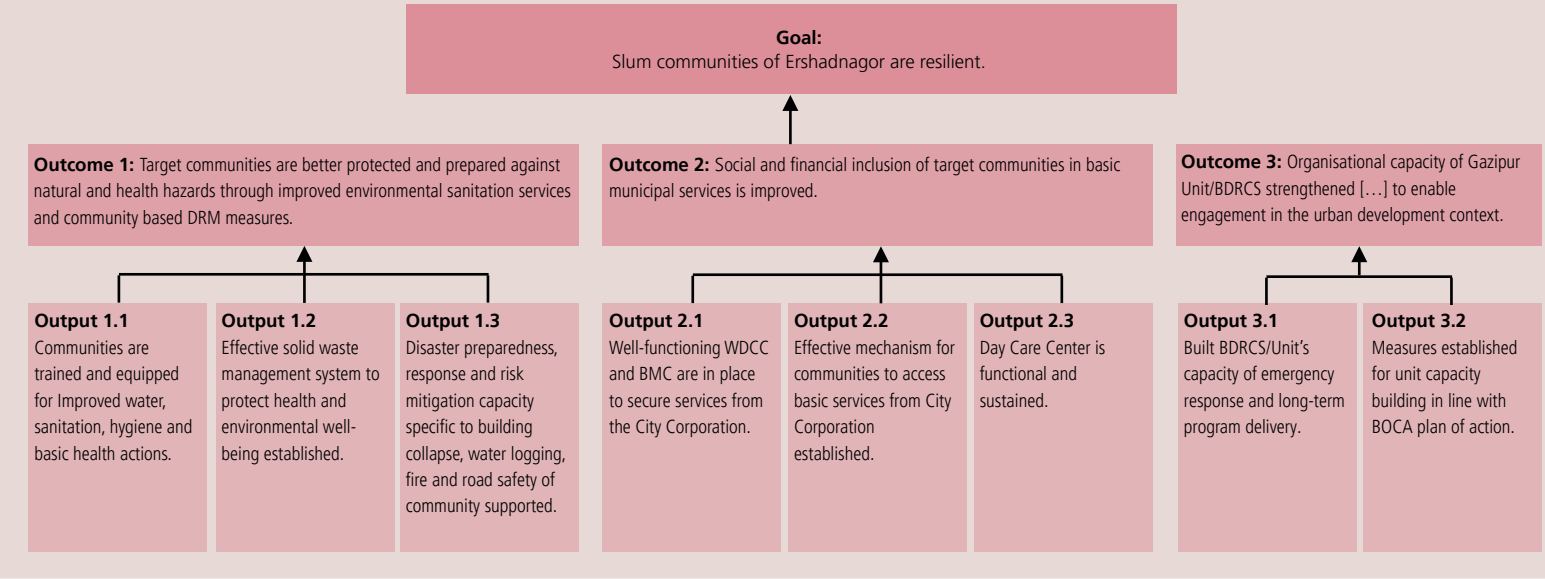
In terms of water and sanitation, the project facilitated water testing and promoted water tank cleaning. It designed hygienic latrines that could be built on the limited available space in the slum context, and then built more than 50 of them. Recognising that advice to wash your hands runs dry when there are no wash basins, it distributed 624 wash-basins following a specific needs assessment.

One output, the consolidation of a day care centre that had been established under the preceding UEP, had to be abandoned in light of prolonged school and childcare closures and limited ownership.

In terms of the capacity of the Gazipur City Unit, the project helped establish a new Red Crescent Youth (RCY) team with 100 members. Whereas the project was associated with the District Unit and supported by its board (i.e. in coordination meetings with GCC), capacity-building of the city unit itself was limited.

Overall, the UER project represents an effort that is small in scale (3,263 households) but rich in scope (resilience dimensions), community grounding, and structural linkages. While it was initially set to conclude in March 2022, UER has been extended by three months to the end of June, thus enabling efforts to complete and consolidate its many achievements.

Fig. 1 | **Project logframe**



2. Evaluation objectives & approach

As laid out in the terms of reference (ToR), this evaluation was commissioned for two reasons - results and learning. **First**, it was to measure changes in the resilience patterns of target communities thus far, and to assess the role of the project therein (outcomes, impact, attribution). **Second**, it was to assess the UER project in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability, and to identify lessons learnt for future programming.

Furthermore, the ToR include a '**needs assessment**' to scope for possible priorities of urban programming by SRC and BDRCS. Note that aspects immediately relevant to the UER project (i.e. aspects for further consolidation are included in this report. The actual needs assessment — which is broader in geographical and sectoral scope — is provided in a separate report ('Priorities, Partners, Pathways').

The ToR furthermore include a set of detailed research questions that relate to evaluation in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

2.1 Research tools

Whereas the use of resilience radar and resilience star was stipulated by the ToR, the strong focus on learning and urban needs meant that the analytical toolset had to be expanded (see figure 2).

A. Resilience radar

This tool is based on a household survey and was used to measure community resilience. It consists of a standard questionnaire that covers multiple dimensions of resilience and converts survey responses to index scores.

Ultimately, this reduces complexity and culminates in the generation of a resilience pattern with just ten index scores. This pattern can then be compared between two datasets and visualised in the resilience radar chart (see fig. 8 on page 12).

To ensure comparability with the baseline data, all questions and index formulae were left unaltered. However, the endline **questionnaire** differed from the baseline in two ways:

- **Deleted questions:** some baseline questions were deleted, in particular those relating to the day care centre.
- **Additional questions:** Furthermore, questions on community engagement, waste management, sustainability of outcomes, as well as on change and attribution were added.

None of these changes affected the calculation of the resilience radar scores, as they were not included in respective formulae.

In terms of **sampling**, the survey included 359 respondents, representing a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% (same as in the baseline). Enumerators were advised to alternate between male and female respondents, leading to an almost perfect gender balance (49.6% female, 50.4% male).

Blocks were sampled by using the Probability-Proportional-to-Size (PPS) technique, leading to higher sample sizes in Blocks 3 and 5 than in Block 6. See details in figure 3 overleaf.

Fig. 2 | **Overview of research tools**

Primarily geared to assess **change & effectiveness** ⟷ Primarily geared to identify **needs, lessons & priorities**

Resilience radar
- Survey-based tool covers 10 dimensions of resilience.
- Applied amongst 359 respondents (representing a confidence level of 95%, margin of error 5%)
- Longitudinal comparison baseline versusendline

Resilience star
- Tool based on focus group discussions, covering 11 dimensions of resilience
- Applied in 3 blocks of the target area
- Allowed for exploration of trends and issues
- Limited comparability with baseline stars

Focus group discussions, observations, transect walk
- FGD with Ward Development Coordination Committee (WDCC)
- FGD with Solid waste collectors
- Two transect walks
- Observation of a community cluster session

Staff reflection workshop
- Conducted at start of the evaluation to engage the project team in the process
- Elicited reflections on all evaluation aspects (success factors, challenges, lessons)

Key informant interviews
- Selected SRC staff
- BDRCS management and key departments
- IFRC and Partner National Society (PNS) representatives (British, German, Swedish RC), numerous partners & actors (GCC, UNDP, BRAC, CARE, etc)

Document review
- Study of progress reports and other key programme documents, work papers, strategic plans, reports from PNS and NGOs

Fig. 3 | **Sampling framework**

Community	Number of **households**	**Resilience radar** sample size actual (planned)	**Resilience star** participants total (male/female)
Block 3	1,252	134 (132)	17 (8/9)
Block 5	1,163	136 (132)	17 (7/10)
Block 6	889	89 (88)	19 (9/10)
Total	**3,304**	**359 (352)**	**53 (24/29)**

The resilience radar survey is based on a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Among survey respondents, 49.6% were female and 50.4% male.

B. Resilience star

In addition to the quantitative resilience radar, the qualitative sister tool was applied in these three blocks. First developed by IFRC in 2016 as part of the 'Roadmap to Community Resilience', the resilience star has been progressively enhanced since.

In the 2017 baseline, it had been applied with seven dimensions. While the tool proved extremely useful, it had been challenging back then to convert narratives into numbers: participants had been asked to merely assign scores to each dimension, ranging from a low 0 to a high 10. Despite qualitative insights being useful (e.g., poor waste management and drainage cleaning had been identified as a key issue), the baseline scores must be seen as having limited validity or accuracy.

A new and improved version of the star (developed by IFRC in 2019) was therefore used as part of this evaluation. This new version is structured along eleven resilience dimensions that are slightly different to those of the radar (see comparison in fig.4). It was agreed with SRC that the new version should be used, considering that this version is being rolled out globally and that it may therefore be applied consistently in the future (thus enabling neat longitudinal comparisons between resilience stars and better use of the star as a community-based monitoring tool).

Notably, the new version of the resilience star comes with facilitation sheets that address the earlier challenge: narratives can be turned into numbers through a system of standard indicators. See appendix B.3 for details.

While both the radar and the star are geared to measure community resilience, it is important to understand their **different logic**: resilience radars are generated for larger areas by aggregating and interpreting the responses of all those surveyed. By contrast, resilience stars are created for each assessed block; each star reflects the results of a specific focus group discussion. The resilience star results are summarised in figure 19 on page 18; detailed results for each block are available in appendix B.2.

C. Focus group discussions, transect walks, observations

To gather further qualitative insights, focus group discussions were arranged with the WDCC as well as waste collectors (following a semi-structured process).

Furthermore, the evaluation team conducted two transect walks to identify progress and issues. This included visits to the local school, the temporary waste collection centres, the existing waste dump in ward 8, visits to a zero-waste street (whose residents had pledged to never litter and keep their street exceptionally clean), and a walk following waste collectors on their route (see a description in the introduction).

One session facilitated by a community cluster volunteer was also attended to understand the coverage of topics and gauge interest and feedback of a cluster group.

D. Staff reflection workshop (SRW)

This workshop aimed a) to harness the experience of the project team for the evaluation process, and b) to identify influencing factors and lessons learnt.

This tool pays tribute to the fact that the project team knows the project best; tapping into and incorporating this knowledge is therefore sensible - especially considering the evaluation's strong focus on learning. Over the course of a full day, four main areas were covered:

a) quick reflections (what worked well, what not? why?)
b) engagement (internal flows, interactions with communities and stakeholders);
c) impact (dimensions of resilience, and the difference the programme made); and
d) lessons (summarising lessons for future programming).

E. Key informant interviews (KII)

Numerous key informants were interviewed as part of this evaluation. These included team members and staff of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS - Headquarters and Gazipur City Unit) and Swiss Red Cross (SRC), of Gazipur City Corporation, and the ward councillor.

In addition, numerous interviews were conducted that focussed on the greater picture of urban programming ('needs assessment'). Informants included BDRCS leadership and

Fig. 4 | **Resilience radar and star compared**

Resilience radar (2017)	**Resilience star** (2019)
1. Community capacity	n.a.[1]
2. Social capital	Social cohesion
3. Inclusiveness	Inclusion
4. Connectedness	Connectedness
5. Disaster risk management	Risk management
6. Safe shelter	Shelter
7. Livelihoods	Economic opportunities
8. Natural resource management	Natural resource management
9. Health	Health
10. Water & sanitation	Water & sanitation
n.a.[2]	Food & nutrition security
n.a.[3]	Infrastructure & services

Comparison of the dimensions of resilience radar (in the 2017 version that was also applied for the endline, in the interest of comparability) **and the resilience star** (2019 version).

[1] No direct equivalent in the star (and 2019 radar)
[2] Food security is included under the livelihood in the 2017 radar
[3] No direct equivalent in the 2017 radar.

senior management, as well as the country representatives of SRC, IFRC, and Partner National Societies (Swiss Red Cross, American Red Cross, British Red Cross, German Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross). Additional interviews were conducted with JICA, UNDP, Swisscontact, SDC, BRAC, CARE, and World Vision.

2.2 Research process

The research for this evaluation was conducted in January 2022 at a height of a new Covid-19 wave fuelled by the Omicron variant.

Despite concerns over infection case numbers, no significant limitations were encountered. A workshop on the evaluation findings and the urban needs assessment was held in an open tent on the roof of BDRCS Headquarters - allowing airflow and reducing the risk of infections.

The team of enumerators and facilitators acted with good caution and care. The successful research process is tribute to the excellent preparation of the project team, which juggled numerous appointments into a tight schedule.

2.3 The role of Covid-19

The resilience radar did not elicit information regarding the impact of Covid-19. The initial impact from lockdowns is well-documented in a separate SRC study from August 2020. However, the impact transcended in resilience star exercises and discussions in many ways. It is understood that most households experienced a sharp decline in income but have recovered to some extent, if not quite to the pre-Covid levels. As the longitudinal comparison is between the pre-Covid situation (2018 baseline) and the current situation, it eclipses the sharp decline in the intervening period.

SECTION B | **FINDINGS**

3. Relevance

The question of an intervention's relevance is more important than often acknowledged, given that relevance is interlinked with effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Figure 5 opposite shows how these aspects are related to each other. For instance, an activity that is based on needs of the target group stands a higher chance of being effective and sustainable (and thus to generate impact) than one that is not.

Let us assess the extent to which the UER project was relevant by answering three questions: a) were activities needs-based, b) were the communities and stakeholders meaningfully engaged in planning, implementation and monitoring, and c) were activities aligned with priorities of local governments?

3.1 Needs-based interventions

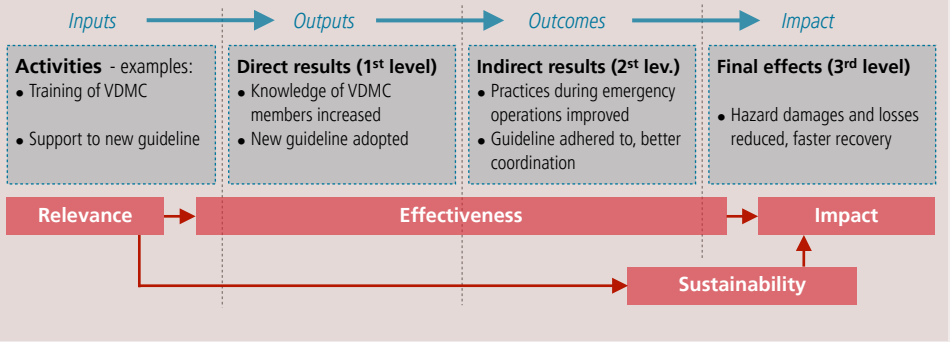
The UER project is an exemplary case study of demand-driven delivery. Not only did the project team already have a good understanding of community needs and priorities from the previous UEP project. It also conducted the baseline study (resilience radar and resilience star before finalising the full project proposal. Notably, it incorporated solid waste management (SWM) as a key feature in response to the need expressed by communities for a sound solution to frequent water logging. Having explored the issue and its causes, it incorporated SWM as a solution that would also help improve sanitation, disaster risk management, natural resource management, and health.

Further detailed exploration of needs (i.e. how much waste was produced, how many carts would be required) and technical aspects ensued. A strong focus on demand-driven and technically sound delivery is a hallmark of the project, as demonstrated by the numerous studies and enquiries. On SWM, an international expert advised on a technical guideline that built on similar SWM projects in India. Another example includes the assessment of people eligible for social safety net support. When Covid-19 emerged in 2020, the team supported a study of its economic and social impact (which led to a separate recovery project with well-targeted measures).

Numerous inputs from communities furthermore helped shape the project throughout its implementation. Overall, the sound

assessment of needs led to a multi-faceted approach that spans across conventional sectors: UER is not a WASH, or DRM, or health, or shelter, or livelihood project. To varying degrees, it is all of the above — and a reflection of the non-sectoral real world.

Fig. 5 | **How different aspects relate to the logical chain**



3.2 Process ownership

The level of process ownership was strong and facilitated through a layered structure of community-based entities. As described in the project overview, this included ward councillor and WDCC at the apex, with BMCs and community clusters beneath. The structure enabled a poignantly community-driven processes for decision-making, implementation, and monitoring. Neighbourhoods took part in clean-up days and awareness-raising, while the WDCC steered community-based monitoring. In each of the 32 clusters, newly trained CC volunteers facilitate sessions on a wide range of topics, while the RCY volunteers from the community and adjacent areas were drawn upon for key events.

With this system on the one hand and a relatively narrow scale on the other (three blocks), the UER project facilitated deep community engagement and ongoing dialogue. Asked how often they had met somebody from BDRCS in the past six months, 71.3% of survey respondents said three times or more. The share of those who had taken part in various training sessions was above 60% for any of the topics.

In concepts of behaviour change, critical mass is a central notion: when a majority adopts a behaviour, it emerges as a local norm. By engaging a large share of the population in a deep or consistent manner, the promoted behaviours (e.g., non-littering, waste segregation, hand-washing) become a standard that other expect. In many ways, collective action became an expectation.

Financial and in-kind contributions furthermore are a sign of relevance and ownership: you would not invest in something you do not need or desire, after all. Sensibly, the UER project required some form of contribution for all tangibles it delivered (see an overview in chapter 5).

3.3 Aligned actions

Having discussed the demand-driven delivery and process ownership, let us turn to our third question: in how far were the UER interventions aligned with the local government?

Very much, is the short answer. Early on, the project team worked with Gazipur City Corporation through three channels - the political leadership (the mayor), the executive leadership (the CEO), and the technical experts and administrators. Ershadnagor's ward councillor argued the case for his ward, while members of the Gazipur City unit (and for key meetings, BDRCS NHQ and SRC country leadership) provided support.

The key issue of solid waste management required buy-in from GCC: collecting waste without a transfer solution (one of GCC's responsibilities) would be akin to having an ambulance service but no hospitals.

Gazipur City Corporation was only formed in 2013 and, according to its CEO, until now, there were many organisational challenges and service gaps. For instance, GCC's waste trucks can remove 1,740 tons of waste per day - a small share of the estimated 10,000 tons that are generated across its territory each day. There is no current strategy to better deal with SWM, although a masterplan is now being developed. Furthermore, the slum of Ershadnagor had been rather low on its priority list, as the lack of previous development testifies.

Against this backdrop, the fact that the UER project succeeded not only in gaining approval for the proposed Material Recovery Facility (MRF), but also 50% GCC co-funding, is a resounding success. The team did not accept setbacks but continued its advocacy for progress - with results: following a delay by many months, the excavators arrived in Ershadnagor just four hours after a meeting with the GCC Acting Mayor.

The MRF is also something new: while secondary transfer stations (STS) are an integral feature across much of Bangladesh, the idea that waste would be sorted first (composting, recycling) to reduce the amount that needs to be trucked to landfill sites is something that, according to the CEO, is worth exploring. If it proves successful, we 'could build 100 MRF with our own money."

4. Effectiveness

What difference did the UER project make to its target communities? In this chapter, let us look at the extent to which progress was achieved along the line of logframe indicators (part 4.1) and then review the the longitudinal comparison between baseline and endline resilience patterns (part 4.2).

It should be noted that although survey data were disaggregated by **gender**, the report does not provide these breakdowns. This is because the response patterns of women and men are almost identical and differences statistically insignificant (this had also been the case in the 2018 baseline).

Gender-specific resilience patterns can be viewed in appendix A.3. The absence of significant differences in response patterns suggests roughly equal effects of the programme, and similar perceptions, amongst women and men.

Survey data were not disaggregated on the basis of **disability** status (which would have required a different and more demanding sampling approach). However, it was observed that persons with disabilities appear to be better included and valued as contributors to the community than they had been in 2019. The disability inclusiveness sub-index increased from 0.45 at baseline to 0.84 at endline.

4.1 Indicator tracking

Figure 6 below and opposite collates information on baseline, target and endline values, as well as the level of achievement. In summary, the table shows that the UER project proved highly successful and effective. In many cases, major progress was achieved, even if the respective target was not fully attained.

Fig. 6 | **Logframe indicators and level of achievement**

Code	Logic	Baseline value	Target value	Endline value	Observations
Impact	Slum communities of Ershadnagor are resilient				
IM1	At least 4 indicators/ criteria of resilience radar improved by 25%	Average score of 10 dimensions: **0.526**	Increase of BL scores by 25% - see figure 7	Average score of 10 dimensions: **0.702**	**Achieved.** The 25% increase was achieved on **6** resilience dimensions. The average increase is **43.0**%. See figure 7 for further details.
Outcome 1	Target communities are better protected and prepared against natural and health hazards through improved environmental sanitation services and community based DRM measures.				
OC1.1	% of households able to name at least one local hazard and one effective measure at household level to deal with it	No data (57.7% in 2020)	**60%**	**70.1%**	**Achieved.** This indicator was not measured at baseline. Project data from 2020 show it as being at 57.7%. EL survey data (E.9/E.X) show that 88.6% could name one local hazard. Some 79.1% knew measures to address these.
OC1.2	% of operational costs for the SWM system at community level are covered sustainably	**n.a.**	**100%**	**64.0%**	**Not achieved.** This indicator stood at 64.0% in late 2021. While there has been progress over 43.0% a year prior, fees will need to be raised to reach this target. See chapter 6 for more details.
OC1.3	% of HHs with access to sufficient and safe water	**65.0%**	**85%**	**80.3%**	**Not achieved, major progress.** Most HHs have sufficient water throughout the year (BL 81.5%/EL 86.4%), and almost all rely on the community water system. Water testing has shown that 92.9% of tabs were safe in 2021, up from 79.8% in 2019. Using the project's system of analysing this indicator, the respective values are multiplied with each other at BL and EL (sufficient x safe).
OC1.4	% of HHs segregating waste	No data (22% in 2020)	**70%**	**31%**	**Not achieved.** This indicator was measured in 2020 (22.3%). At endline, 69.7% showed two separate bins and said they were segregating. Other observations (FGD with waste collectors, project monitoring) however show that fewer people actually segregate their waste - estimated to be around 30%. Based on observations, project monitoring data indicate this value to be at 31%
OC1.5	% of households with soap and water at the hand washing station commonly used by the family members	**41.9%**	**90%**	**74.1%**	**Not achieved, major progress.** The project raised awareness; 624 wash basins were also distributed. The survey (J.5) showed that in addition to the 74.1%, 12.5% had a fixed water point but no soap.
Output 1.1	Communities are trained and equipped for Improved water, sanitation, hygiene and basic health actions.				
OP111	# of Community/Red Cross volunteers and workers will be trained on First Aid, improved water, sanitation, hygiene and health practices.	**n.a.**	**64**	**64**	Community cluster volunteers were trained in multiple topics and now facilitate bi-weekly sessions.
OP112	# of HH received orientation on improved water, sanitation, hygiene and health practices	n.a.	**3,263**	**3,263**	The cumulative number of participating households in all sessions was 3,676.
OP113	# of water quality checks carried out	120	**120**	**537**	Numbers refer to annually performed water tests (EL: 2021).

Fig. 6 | **Logframe indicators and level of achievement** (continued)

Code	Logic	Baseline value	Target value	Endline value	Observations
Output 1.2	Effective solid waste management system to protect health and environmental well-being established.				
OP121	# of HH regularly paid the waste collection fee	n.a.	**2,284**	**1,877**	The target value was to equal 70% of all HHs. Currently, 57.6% were reported as paying regularly, although financial data suggest that on average, 2,033 HHs paid the monthly fee. See chapter 6.
Output 1.3	Disaster preparedness, response and risk mitigation capacity specific to building collapse, water logging, fire and road safety of community supported.				
OP131	# of awareness raising sessions organised with communities and institutions on DRR	n.a.	**864**	**614**	Number refers to PASSA sessions (see also OP135 below).
OP132	# of DRR plan is in place and updated regularly	n.a.	**5**	**5**	Includes 4 school plans
OP133	# of DRM activities are implemented	n.a.	**10**	**7**	7 activities in 2021 alone - Kamalendu, total?
OP134	# of Contingency plans developed and updated annually	n.a.	**3**	**3**	Contingency plans in place
OP135	# of persons reached with sensibilisation activities for DRR and CCA (OPDRM1)	n.a.	**n.a.**	**9,490**	Cumulative number of participants across a total of 614 PASSA sessions. Additional meetings held on CP, RRAP and other aspects.
Outcome 2	Social and financial inclusion of target communities in basic municipal services is improved.				
OC2.1	% of people who have increased knowledge of social safety net programmes of the Government	**n.a.**	**80%**	**n.a.**	This indicator is relative and cannot be measured. However, knowledge of SSNPs has increased from **0.364** (index score, based on question D.10) at BL to **0.463** at EL.
OC2.2	% of people receiving basic municipal services	**n.a.**	**40%**	**72.3%**	Average for four regular services of water (80.3%), waste collection (90%), drainage cleaning (68.5%), and street sweeping (55.2%).
Output 2.1	Well-functioning WDCC and BMC are in place to secure services from the City Corporation.				
OP211	# of block-level integrated annual development plan are developed	n.a.	**3**	**3**	
OP212	# of meetings are organised	n.a.	**120**	**32**	Kamalendu, total number?
OP213	# of planned community-led actions carried out by the BMC	n.a.	**30**	**11**	Kamalendu, total number?
Output 2.2	Effective mechanism for communities to access basic services from City Corporation established.				
OP221	# of orientation sessions on municipal services organised	n.a.	**3**	**189**	
OP222	# of dialogues held between community and municipal authority	n.a.	**6**	**5**	Kamalendu, total number?
OP223	# of complaint resolved by GCC (complaints related to drainage cleaning, water and sanitation services, social safety net and birth/ death registration)	n.a.	**36**	at least **48**	According to the EL survey, 128 complaints were lodged by respondents to GCC, of which 48 were fully resolved. Extrapolated from the sample to the whole population, 436 complaints would have been fully resolved.
Outcome 3	Organisational capacity of Gazipur Unit/BDRCS strengthened in line with the NS strategic priorities and to enable the unit for engagement in urban development context.				
OC3.1	# of topics rated above benchmark in BOCA exercise increased	29.0%	**43.5%**	**n.a.**	In 2018, 29% of topics were rated above the BOCA benchmark. No BOCA has been conducted yet in either 20211 or 2022.
Output 3.1	Built BDRCS/Unit's capacity of emergency response and long-term program delivery.				
OP311	RCY team formed and functional at upazila level	0	**3**	**3**	
OP312	# of staff/ Volunteers/ UEC/UDRT members trained on project and finance management and Urban Development	n.a.	**30**	**??**	Kamalendu, total number?
OP313	# of City Corporation Disaster Management Committee meeting attended by unit	n.a.	**8**	**4**	Kamalendu, total number?
Output 3.2	Measures established for unit capacity building in line with BOCA plan of action.				
OP321	Land allocation is received and new office building design finalised.	n.a.	**Yes**	**No**	
OP322	# of volunteers, UEC and members are well aware about the system of RCRC Movement, gender & diversity inclusion	n.a.	**60**	**XX**	Kamalendu, total number?
OP323	# of Unit members and volunteers received training on project management and reporting	n.a.	**25**	**XX**	Kamalendu, total number?
OP324	# of RCRC volunteers trained in economic support (OPES17)	n.a.	**n.a.**	**XX**	Kamalendu, total number?

Importantly, the target of the **impact** indicator (IM1) was reached: this had aimed for a 25% increase in the value of at least four resilience dimension scores. As figure 7 shows, this ambitious increase was in fact reached for six of the dimensions (disaster preparedness, safe shelter, inclusiveness, natural resource management, health, as well as water & sanitation). Increases were noted on all dimensions except for resilient livelihoods (largely due to Covid-19, see details in part 4.2).

In terms of outcome indicators, major improvements were noted over the baseline. However, several targets were not attained.

Critical gaps relate in particular to the cost coverage of the **SWM** service as well as the share of households **segregating waste** (OC 1.2 and OC1.4 - discussed in part 4.3). Regarding the **WASH**-related indicators (OC1.3 and OC1.5), very substantial advances were noted, although the ambitious targets were missed. In terms of **social and financial inclusion**, one target was reached (OC2.2) while the other could not be assessed (OC2.1). A substantial increase in the knowledge of social safety nets was observed, however. Concerning the **capacity-strengthening** of the Gazipur district unit (OC3.1), the indicator could not be assessed. While there were advances in terms of volunteer numbers, the more qualitative capacity improvement was found to be rather limited.

4.2 Community resilience

The analysis of resilience patterns rests primarily on the resilience radar surveys in Ershadnagor. The patterns are visualised in figure 8 overleaf. In the discussion below, we will go through each dimension and compare detailed base/endline results. The findings from resilience star exercises are used to complement the analysis (see also figure 19).

Dimension 1 | Community capacity

Baseline 0.72 (high) | Endline 0.90 (very high)

This index is based on questions A.1-A.11 and includes aspects such as leadership, trust in public officials, availability of general services, resources, the ability to reflect on past performance and set priorities, collective action, and access to information.

At **baseline**, the question scores ranged from 0.52 (childcare services, question A.3) to 0.84 (collective action, A.6). At **endline**, all scores were in the 'very high' band, with scores of at least 0.84. On the resilience star, there is no neat equivalent for this dimension. However, it was noted that 'infrastructure and services', which is an aspect covered under this radar dimension, scored 0.73. Participants noted that roads and drainages were being improved and that the Block Management Committees (BMC) and Ward Development Coordination Committee (WDCC) worked closely with ward councillor and Gazipur City Corporation to improve overall conditions.

Dimension 2 | Social capital

Baseline 0.91 (very high) | Endline 0.95 (very high)

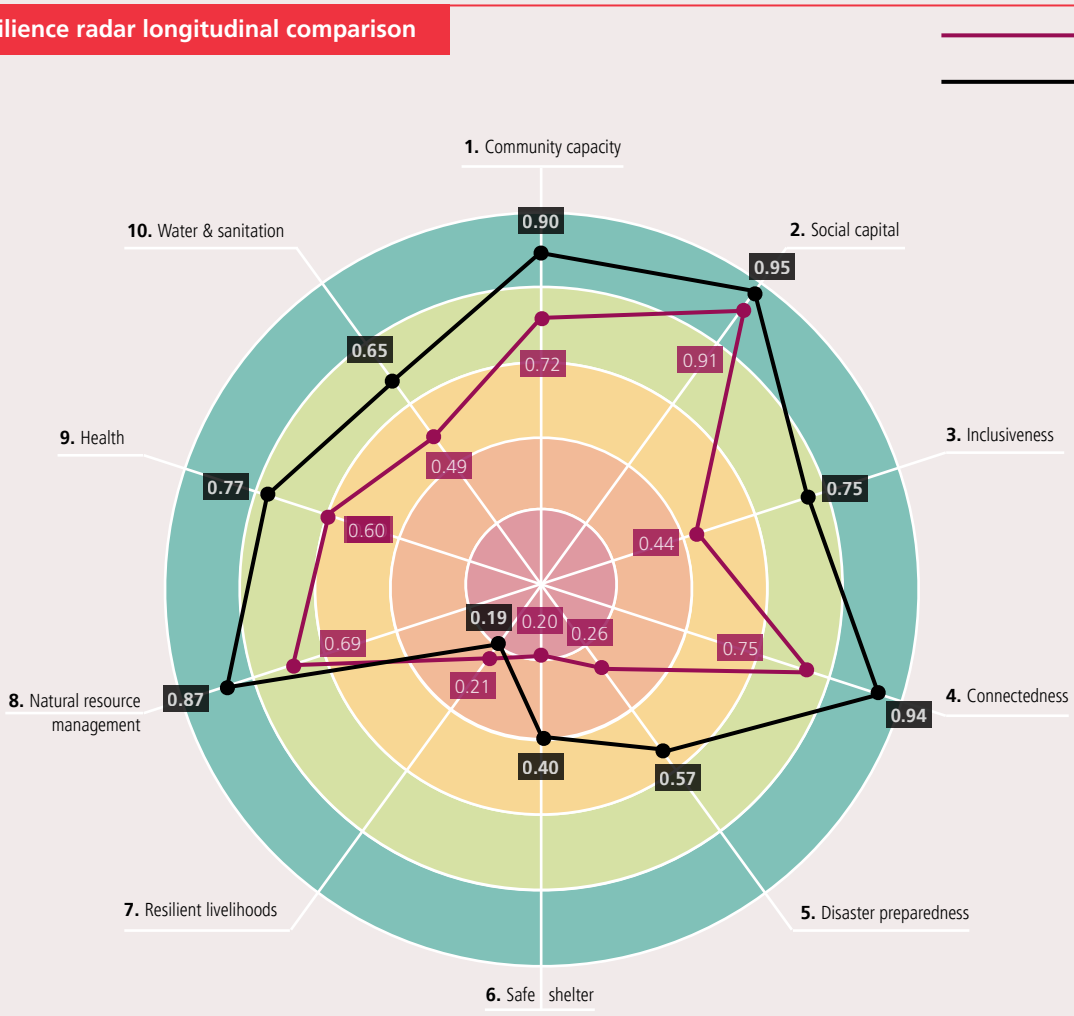
This index is based on questions B.1-B.7 and covers aspects such as sense of belonging, mutual support, commitment to the community, aspirations and conflict resolution. At **baseline**, the question scores ranged at 0.84 or above ('very high'). At **endline**, all question scores were at 0.92 or higher.

The roughly corresponding **resilience star** score for social cohesion is slightly lower (0.83). Participants said that social cohesion and joint problem-solving had significantly improved over recent years. People help each other and regularly attend meetings such as those called for by the BMC and cluster volunteers.

Fig. 7 | **Longitudinal comparison: Ershadnogor resilience scores**

Dimension	Baseline (2018)	Endline (2022)	Variation (EL-BL)	Change (%)	Remarks	
Community capacity	0.717	0.896	0.174	**24.3%**	Possibly achieved*	* Since both BL and EL results come with a margin of error (5.0% in each case), it cannot be ruled out that the recorded increases on these dimension scores in fact were at or above the 25% target. ** This dimension was already very high at baseline.
Social capital	0.913	0.953	0.040	**4.4%**	Not applicable**	
Inclusiveness	0.438	0.746	0.308	**70.3%**	**Achieved**	
Connectedness	0.750	0.938	0.176	**23.5%**	Possibly achieved*	
Disaster preparedness	0.264	0.565	0.301	**114.0%**	**Achieved**	
Safe shelter	0.196	0.401	0.205	**104.6%**	**Achieved**	
Livelihoods	0.206	0.194	-0.012	**-5.8%**	Not achieved	
Natural resource management	0.693	0.866	0.228	**32.9%**	**Achieved**	
Health	0.599	0.771	0.172	**28.7%**	**Achieved**	
Water & sanitation	0.486	0.649	0.163	**33.5%**	**Achieved**	
Average score	**0.526**	**0.702**	**0.176**	**43.0%**		

Fig. 8 | **Resilience radar longitudinal comparison**



Key to colour codes

Very high	0.81 - 1.00
High	0.61 - 0.80
Medium	0.41 - 0.60
Low	0.21 - 0.40
Very low	0.00 - 0.20

How to read the radar

Survey results are grouped by dimension (e.g. 'community capacity') and aggregated to scores with a range from a minimum of 0.00 and a maximum of 1.00. These scores are connected with lines, making up a resilience pattern. The chart shows the resilience pattern of target communities at the 2018 baseline (purple) and at the 2022 endline (black). The larger endline pattern indicates an increase in the level of resilience. The summary resilience index increased from 0.53 (medium) to 0.71 (high).

Participants noted that gender-based violence had increased, a finding that is in line with a separate SRC study on the social and economic impact of Covid-19. Other issues raised in the resilience stars included drug-related crimes, child marriages, and some conflicts (both within and between families). The community was usually able to facilitate conflict resolution.

Dimension 3 | **Inclusiveness**

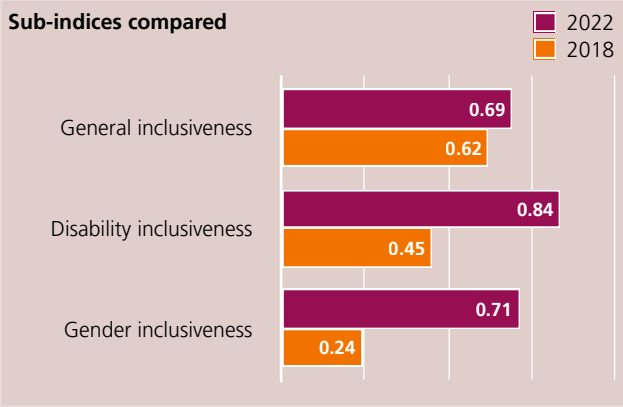
Baseline 0.44 (medium) | Endline 0.75 (high)

This index is based on questions C.1-C.8 and includes three sub-indices related to general, disability and gender aspects. In terms of **general inclusiveness** (absence of discrimination and of conflicts/tensions based on personal attributes/backgrounds), the sub-index score increased slightly from 0.62 at baseline to 0.69 at endline.

Regarding **disability inclusiveness** (equal access for persons with disabilities and equal standing of them as valued contributors), the score increased drastically from 0.45 to 0.84.

Concerning **gender inclusiveness**, the radar survey focused on the extent to which men and women are involved in community-level decision making. This score saw a massive increase from 0.24 to 0.71. Figure 10 shows how dramatically the gender pattern in community-level decision-making has shifted from a male realm to mostly equitable decision-

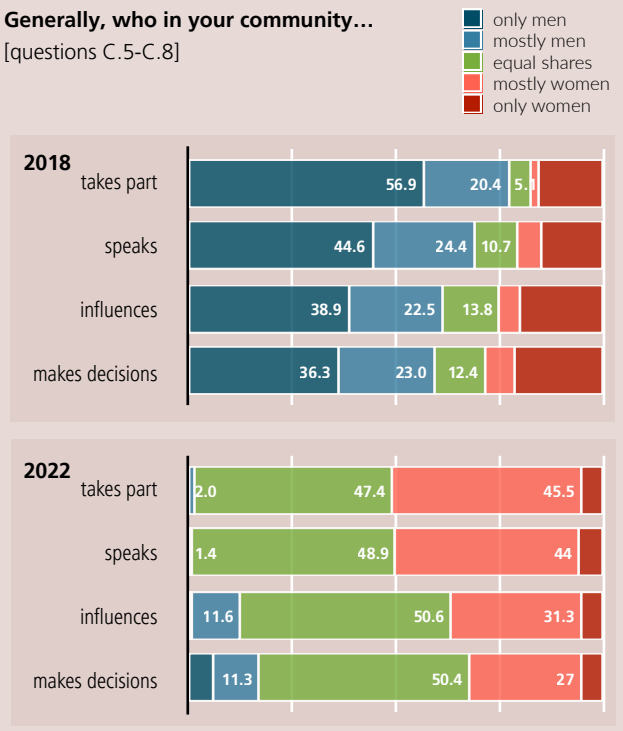
Fig. 9 | **Inclusiveness**



making. In fact, women are now seen as slightly more influential than men (both women and men agree).

The **resilience star** exercises (which featured a gender balance among participants) showed an even higher score for inclusiveness (at 0.90). Participants said that most decisions were made jointly by women and men, and that the influence of women had improved. The community also made deliberate efforts to include persons with disabilities and all ethic groups. They raised the concern that thus far, the city government had not made widow allowances available to anybody in Ershadnagor.

Fig. 10 | **Gender: balance and power**



Dimension 4 | **Connectedness**

Baseline 0.75 (high) | Endline 0.94 (very high)

The connectedness index assesses the links between communities and next-tier agencies and actors. It is based on questions D.1-D.3. The longitudinal comparison (see fig.11) shows that communities and government authorities are now seen as working together more closely, that communities are better at seeking support, and that government agencies are more responsive to the issues raised.

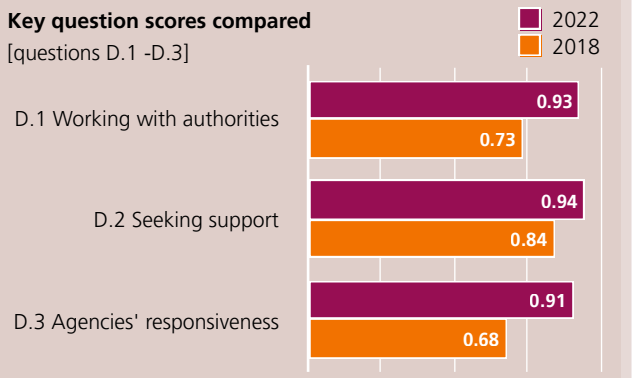
This encouraging advance in terms of vertical linkages are mirrored by the results of the **resilience star**: scoring an average of 0.83, participants noted that government staff now occasionally visited their ward, that they now knew more about available services, and that they had good access to the government. Some mentioned that were issues they wanted GCC to address (in particular more frequent support to drainage cleaning as well as finding a solution to the lack of emergency ambulances). Yet, they also said that these issues had yet to be raised with GCC in the first place.

Survey data show that general knowledge of access channels to the government as well as available safety net schemes have improved. An index of safety net awareness now scores 0.46, up from 0.36 in 2018.

The share of those lodging complaints to the government (BL: 30.7%/EL 35.7%) as well as of those receiving a response (BL:46.8%/EL 60.9%) has increased. Notably, those saying that their concern had been fully addressed has almost doubled, from **34.6%** at baseline to **61.5%** at endline.

These are encouraging signals for greater accountability and demand-driven service delivery by the government. Almost half of the survey respondents (44.5%) say that some services are lacking. At the same time, 87.0% say that they understand how to raise their concerns with relevant bodies.

Fig. 11 | **Better connected**



Dimension 5 | **Disaster preparedness**

Baseline 0.26 (low) | Endline 0.57 (medium)

This index is based on a total of 12 questions that are grouped under the two sub-indices of community and household-level preparedness. With +114%, the overall disaster preparedness score has seen the greatest increase of all 10 resilience radar dimensions. At the same time, the low base means that room for further improvement remains.

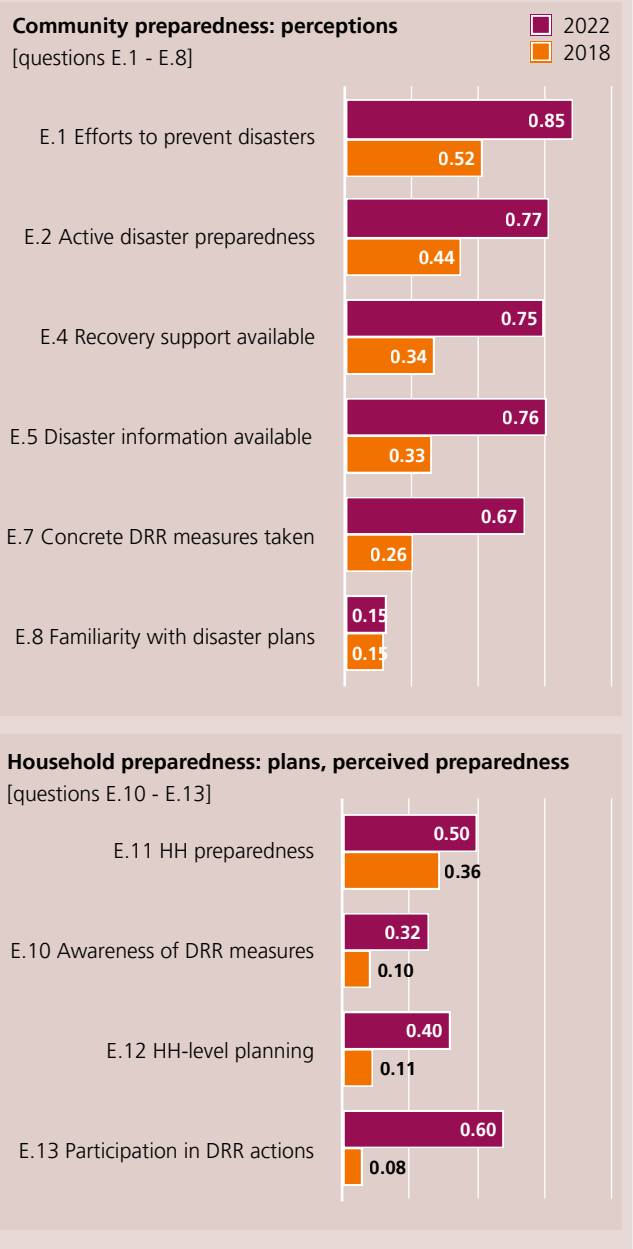
The **resilience star** exercises of 'risk management' generated a perfect match in terms of the dimension score (0.57). Participants noted that DRM committees had been formed that led the development of risk reduction action plans (RRAP) and contingency plans, that training on First Aid, PASSA and fire-fighting had been provided and drainages cleaned.

They also noted that some households had mitigated some risks. Yet, they observed that many of the RRAP measures had not been implemented. A major concern of unsafe electrical wiring would have required collaboration with technical agencies such as electricity providers. Furthermore, they noted a lack of equipment for response, and unaddressed issues in terms of fire safety (especially unsafe use of gas cylinders).

Back on the resilience radar, the sub-index for **community-level preparedness** has increased from 0.37 to 0.68 (+85%). It shows increases for all aspects except for the community awareness of RRAP and contingency plans — suggesting a possible need for wider dissemination.

In terms of **household-level preparedness**, the sub-index score almost tripled from the very low base of 0.16 to 0.45 (+279%). Largely thanks to PASSA training and awareness-raising by community cluster volunteers, this represents a formidably strong increase. However, as the related shelter dimension also shows, many households have yet to implement basic safety measures to reduce their risk.

Fig. 12 | **Disaster preparedness**



Dimension 6 | **Safe shelter**

Baseline 0.20 (very low) | Endline 0.40 (medium)

In terms of the shelter dimensions, the original resilience radar questions had been replaced at baseline to better fit the urban context. They feature aspects related to fire safety and earthquake preparedness (see fig. 13).

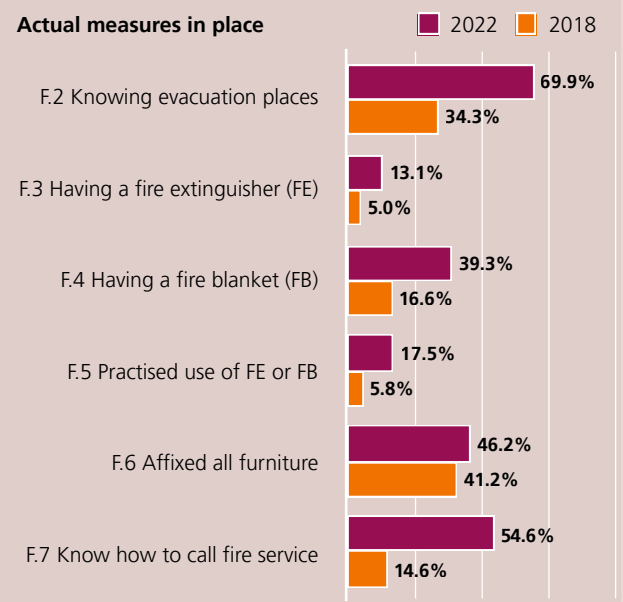
In the **resilience star** exercises, participants highlighted that although many people had been engaged in PASSA trainings, not all of them had been able to actually mitigate identified risk factors such as unsafe wiring (citing mainly the associated costs). Furthermore, they noted that most homes had been constructed without considering safety and building codes. In addition, they pointed out that most homes were too small for the household size.

Dimension 7 | **Livelihoods**

Baseline 0.21 (low) | Endline 0.19 (very low)

As the only dimension that has seen a decline, livelihoods deserves particular attention. It is worth noting that two of the three sub-indices are directly linked to external factors such as the job market. Livelihood diversity counts the number of a household's income sources. The share of households with a single source has slightly increased from 80.4% to 84.4%,

Fig. 13 | **Safer shelters**

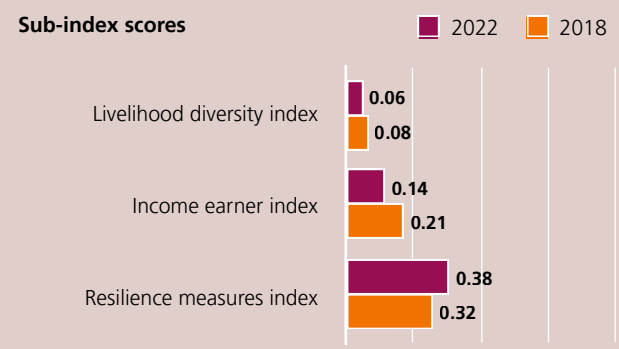


while those with three or more sources are now fewer. Correspondingly, the income earner index (based on the dependency ratio) has fallen: 79.7% of households now have a single income earner, compared to 68.5% at baseline.

Resilience star participants confirmed that most households now rely on single income earners, and highlighted the negative impact that Covid-19 had inflicted on economic opportunities. Many had lost their jobs or business income. In order to cope, people depleted savings and lend money.

These observations are in line with the SRC assessment of August 2020, which analysed the economic impact of Covid-19 and associated restrictions. The assessment found that the impact was far higher in urban Gazipur than in rural Gaibandha. In Ershadnagor, almost every household had lost income. The share of households living on BDT 5,000 (CHF 52) or less per month had grown from 21% pre-Covid to 74% at the height of the crisis (SRC 2020: p.7).

Fig. 14 | **Livelihoods**



By the time of this evaluation in January 2022, many households appear to have somewhat recovered from the worst. Survey data show that the level of indebtedness is still higher than it had been in 2018. The respective index is inverted - read it as 'freedom from debt'. Whereas it had stood at 0.50 at baseline, it is now at 0.43 (i.e., slightly higher level of debt). Yet, it is understood that the debt levels are nowhere close to what they had been in the early phase of the pandemic. This falls in line with the December 2021 report on a project that SRC smartly mounted on top of the UER project (see box on the next page).

In fact, this recovery project is seen as having buffered the fall and helped small businesses and the most vulnerable survive and recover.

In terms of resilience measures, the survey found that membership in savings groups increased from 31.5% at baseline to 41.5% at endline. Somewhat surprisingly, access to credit also improved: almost two-thirds (64.6%) now say they could get access to credit, compared to 42.0% in 2018. It should be noted that the UER project did not directly engage in either of these fields.

Resilience star participants noted the positive role of savings groups as well as skills training (the latter was supported through the recovery project). They listed lack of job opportunities (in particular for men) and lack of start-up capital for new businesses as current challenges.

Dimension 8 | **Natural resource management**

Baseline 0.69 (medium) | Endline 0.87 (very high)

For the urban context of Ershadnagor, the questions under this dimension were adjusted at baseline from the original

Piggybacking recovery: the add-on project

Following a robust assessment of the economic and social impact of Covid-19 on exisiting target communities in Gaibandha and Gazipur that highlighted the severity in the urban context, SRC and BDRCS developed an urban recovery project for Ershadnagor.

Implemented between January and December 2021 with funding of CHF 100,000 from SDC, this add-on project included:

- Provision of vouchers for vocational training to 150 HH,
- Conditional cash grants (CCG) to 199 small businesses of BDT 15,000 (CHF 159) with training, based on recovery plans;
- Unconditional cash grants (UCG) to 275 vulnerable households of BDT 5,000 each (CHF 53).
- Community awareness-raising and promotion of self-protection measures to gender-based violence (GBV), and
- Support to survivors of GBV through specialised services.

While the add-on project was not specifically evaluated as part of this study, the wider context obtained through the field research shows that the add-on measures were timely and relevant. The project report highlights alignment with prevailing standards for cash assistance, professional handling, sound targeting of beneficiaries, and satisfaction with the provided services.

Monitoring of these interventions showed also considerable effectiveness: UCG recipients used the grants to cover pressing needs (food, basic household items, medical expenses, and debt repayments). In terms of CCG recipients, 77% reported an increase in average weekly sales following their business recovery plans.

The piggybacking (or: nexus) approach that links relied and development furthermore proved efficient, utilising the UER structures.

resilience radar version — this dimension covers solid waste management and drainage cleaning.

Solid waste management was a key focus of the UER project; it is discussed in further detail under part 4.3. The survey results show that:

- almost all respondents (98.9%) now say that there is a functional waste management system in their area (up from 35.4% at baseline).
- Among these respondents, almost all (96.5%) use the system, compared to 77.8% at baseline. These figures translate to 95.4% of all households now using the waste management system, compared to 27.5% in 2018.
- Almost all users (98.2%) claim to regularly pay the waste collection fee. Project monitoring data however show that this share stands somewhat lower (57.5% as of late 2021).
- In terms of satisfaction with drainage cleaning, the sub-index has increased from 0.52 to 0.66. The share saying that drainages are being cleaned to a sufficient extent has more than doubled, from 15.2% to 39.7%.

As part of the evaluation, further questions were added that had not been asked at baseline. Most households (85.8%) say they know what happens with the waste after it has been collected.

Regarding waste segregation, 69.7% of households said they were segregating waste and could show two separate bins. Almost all of them (86.4%) started segregating less than three years ago, pointing to the role of the UER project. The high rate of people claiming to segregate waste indicates social desirability: people know 'what is the right thing to do.' However, direct observation, interviews with waste collectors, and project monitoring data indicate that the actual share is far lower, standing at around 30%.

In terms of the **resilience star** (which took the broader natural resource management lens), participants gave an average score of 0.67 (high). They did indeed note that many people were segregating waste (and often composting at home, supporting widely practiced home gardening).

They also pointed out that most people lacked knowledge on the impact of climate change and adaptation strategies, as well as on general principles of preserving natural resources. They criticised a lack of 'wise planning' that considered natural factors to development.

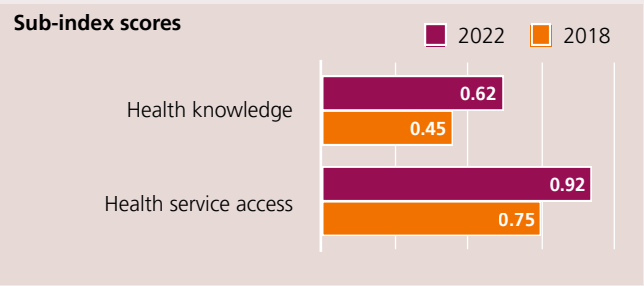
Dimension 9 | **Health**

Baseline 0.60 (medium) | Endline 0.77 (high)

The health index is based on the two sub-indices of health knowledge and health service access (see figure 17).

In terms of health **knowledge** (which focused on danger signs during pregnancy as well as ante- and post-natal care), there was an increase from 0.45 to 0.62. Perhaps unsurpri-

Fig. 17 | **Health**



singly, women were far more knowledgeable than men (women 0.72, men 0.52) in this regard. Maternal and child health featured as one of the topics covered by community cluster volunteers (see photo above).

Regarding health service **access**, the score improved from 0.75 at baseline to 0.92 at endline. The greatest change was observed regarding the existence of community health workers: 93.3% knew of one, compared to just 63.8% in 2018.

Resilience star participants rated health at a high 0.83. They noted that services were indeed easily accessible (including a community midwife and vaccination centre), but also pointed out that allocated doctors were sometimes not present. In terms of services, they said that more child health services as well as ambulance services were needed. Health knowledge was generally good, and people practiced mostly good

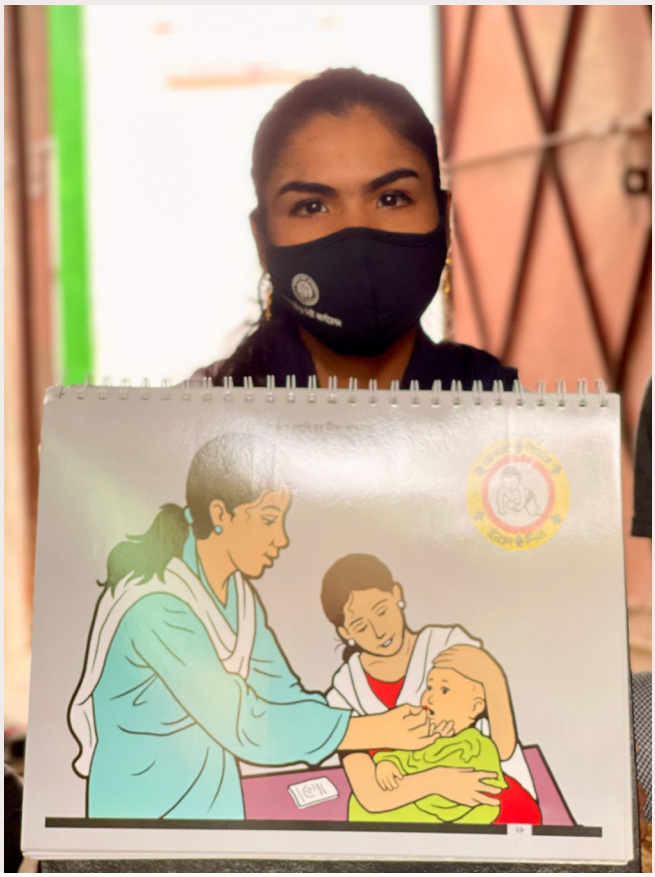
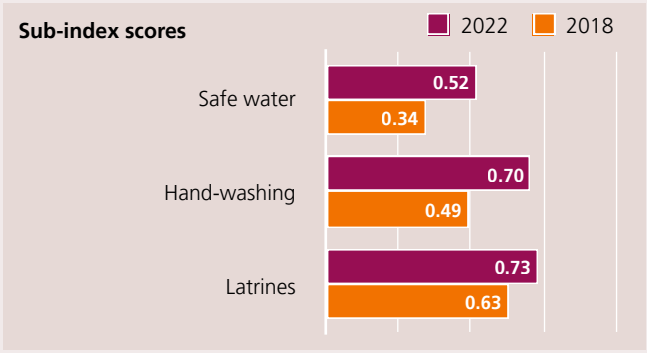


Fig. 18 | **Water & sanitation**



personal hygiene. Aside from the project's health sessions, BRAC was also mentioned as having contributed to improved health and hygiene practices.

Dimension 10 | **Water & sanitation**

Baseline 0.49 (medium) | Endline 65 (high)

The water & sanitation index is based on the three sub-indices of safe water, hand-washing, and latrines (see figure 18). In terms of **safe water**, most households have community or household taps as their primary source (91.3%). The sub-index for safe water does not accurately reflect the situation on water safety, as it counts water treatment (prior to consumption) as a key measure. However, The project invested in water testing and promoted the regular cleaning of water tanks. As a result, water is now safer and cleaner: of the 499 water tests conducted in 2021, 92.9% showed the water to be safe (up from 79.,8% in 2019).

In terms of **hand-washing**, 74.1% were found to have a wash basin and soap present - almost twice than the 41.9% back in 2018. To a large part, this is in line with the distribution of wash basins by the project. Hand-washing practices also improved considerably - the index rose from 0.40 to 0.60, summarising hand-washing at all critical times.

Concerning **latrines**, the share of households with latrines had already been very high at baseline (96.4%) and has increased marginally (98.9%). The real difference is not in the number of toilets but their standards: 63.3% now meet government hygienic standards, compared to 36.1% in 2018. The UER project pioneered model toilets that meet the standards while at the same time fitting the limited space of typical slum households.

The **resilience star** groups scored water & sanitation at a 'very high' 0.87 on average. Groups cited universal toilet coverage, improved cleaning of toilets and water tanks, regular water testing, as well as enhanced environmental sanitation as a result of better waste management.

Fig. 19 | **Resilience star: summary of listed capacities and vulnerabilities**

Dimension	Score	Capacities	Vulnerabilities
1. Risk management	**0.57**	▸ Formed DRM committee, created RRAP and contingency plan ▸ Training on First Aid, PASSA and fire-fighting ▸ Drainages cleaned to reduce water logging ▸ Some households have mitigated risks	▸ Many community-level actions in RRAP not implemented (require coordination with agencies - e.g. electrical wiring) ▸ Gas cylinders and electric wiring high risks ▸ Lack of equipment for disaster preparedness ▸ Some identified HH-level risks could not be mitigated (structural reinforcements, electrical wiring)
2. Health	**0.83**	▸ Doctors and clinic, child hospital, maternal health centre nearby, vaccination centre ▸ Good knowledge about common diseases ▸ ANC and PNC well known; TDH and BRAC offer services. The community has a midwive ▸ Good personal hygiene practices ▸ Children can get vaccinated	▸ Insufficient numbers of MBBS doctors. ▸ Doctors are often not present ▸ More health facilities for children needed ▸ Maternity hospital far away ▸ No ambulance service for emergencies
3. Water & sanitation	**0.87**	▸ Almost all HHs have toilets, regular cleaning ▸ Most HHs have water taps and safe water ▸ Many clean their tanks twice a year; regular water testing ▸ Almost all HHs have hand washing facilities; most know critical times for hand-washing ▸ Waste collection works; most use this service	▸ Toilets are connected with the drainage. ▸ Drainages not sufficiently cleaned ▸ Insufficient water pumps ▸ Not enough space to install wash basins and toilets at all HHs ▸ Waste from shops and the public are thrown in the drainage ▸ Some HHs have insufficient water
4. Shelter	**0.40**	▸ 80% of households have the ability to build and improve homes ▸ Some households have adequate living space ▸ People were engaged in PASSA; some have been able to mitigate HH risks	▸ 20% are not able to construct/improve their homes ▸ There is no planning with safety and building code considerations in mind ▸ 70% of homes are too small for the HH size ▸ Electric wires are very close to the houses
5. Food & nutrition security	**0.73**	▸ People have three meals per day ▸ Many people are aware of what constitutes a healthy diet ▸ Balanced diet possible - people can get what they need	▸ Some children are malnourished. ▸ Some elderly persons do not have a healthy diet ▸ Lack of longer-term food storage in many HHs
6. Social cohesion	**0.83**	▸ People trust each other. Social cohesion improved. ▸ Joint problem-solving is common ▸ Many smaller conflicts are solved by conflict parties ▸ People regularly attend meetings ▸ Block management, community and ward committees exist	▸ Occasional clashes within families ▸ Gender-based violence increased ▸ Early/young marriages still common ▸ Drug-related crime and violence exists
7. Inclusion	**0.90**	▸ Men and women take decisions jointly. Women's participation is stronger than that of men ▸ Persons with disabilities and ethnic groups are included ▸ All stand together to clean roads and drainages	▸ Widow allowance not provided by the government ▸ Some people are unwilling to make financial contributions to development initiatives
8. Economic opportunities	**0.67**	▸ Some savings groups exist ▸ More job opportunities for women (and work load) ▸ Some skills training provided by BDRCS, YDD	▸ Limited work opportunities for men ▸ Most HHs have single incomes ▸ For many HHs, expenditures exceed incomes ▸ Covid-19 impacted opportunities and depleted savings ▸ Lack of capital to start up businesses
9. Infrastructure & services	**0.73**	▸ Primary and high schools ▸ Roads and drainages constructed or improved ▸ Government offices are close by ▸ Graveyard exists but is at capacity	▸ No community centre, park or playground ▸ No college in the community, no technical training institute ▸ Minor roads in poor condition
10. Natural resource management	**0.67**	▸ Home gardening widely practiced ▸ Composting and recycling common ▸ Many HHs segregate waste	▸ Very limited knowledge on climate change and preservation of natural resources ▸ Lack of 'wise planning'
11. Connectedness	**0.83**	▸ Government staff sometimes visit ▸ Community has good access to the government ▸ Good knowledge of available services ▸ Good communication with several NGOs	▸ City corporation does not provide regular drainage cleaning and sewage facilities ▸ Community has not yet complained to GCC ▸ Lack of ambulance service (and access)

5. Efficiency

As shown in chapter 4, the Urban Empowerment and Resilience project was highly effective at supporting Ershadnagor's path to greater resilience. To what extent, then, can it be seen as efficient?

Let us first have a look at the big picture. The actual expenditures (up to the end of 2021) of CHF 478,300 were used to benefit 3,304 households — equating to CHF 144.76 per household. This is roughly 3.5 times higher than the respective figure for the DRM programme in rural Gaibandha district (CHF 42.11). Why were the per-household expenditures so much higher? Four factors are identified.

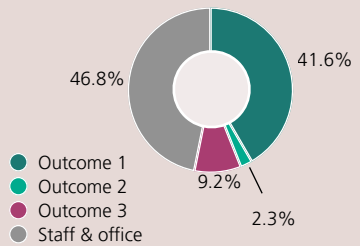
First, the rather small scale of the project meant that economies of scale worked against it: you need a project office, staff, vehicles and the like to manage a project - no matter whether it has 1,000 or 100,000 beneficiaries. Of course, you would need more staff and stationary in the latter case, but the relatively high cost items (such as senior staff) and some fixed costs will always be there and cannot be proportionally downsized.

Second, the project invested in innovation and quality: the solid waste management system in particular (or the slum-suited model latrines) were not off-the shelf models but solutions that required technical guidance, testing, and refinement. The focus on innovation and quality was a strong feature of the project. With good documentation of these pilot approaches, the expenditures should be seen as investments in innovation.

Third, urban programming tends to be more expensive than in rural areas - just think of office rent rates, wages, or the hidden cost of being stuck in Dhaka's traffic jams.

As shown in figure 21 below, the staff and office costs accounted for almost half (46.8%) of all field-level expenditures in 2021. While quality and innovation has its price, it is also reasonable to expect that future programming will benefit from the experiences and lessons of the UER project. Having piloted new solutions, similar future projects may furthermore go to scale and thus have proportionally lower overheads.

Fig. 21 | **Actual expenditures 2021: breakdown**



In 2021, the UER had field-level expenditures of BDT 12.4 million (CHF 135,700).

53.2% were related to the three outcomes, while 46.8% were incurred by costs for staff and office running.

Although staff and office costs were proportionally high, the case can be made that with a smaller team, less would have been achieved, or with lower quality.

This takes us to the **fourth** point: transaction costs. By design and given urban necessity, the project worked through local entities, such as GCC, WDCC, BMC and others. To facilitate community-driven processes and embed them into the local governance context, a lot of time must be spent on meetings and advocacy. This does not incur great cost under any of the outcomes, but it accounts for a lot of time that project staff need to invest.

The result of these efforts is a locally driven and owned structure that stands a high chance of being sustained (see ch. 6). Furthermore, these processes and the fact that local contributions were required for most of the UER tangibles generated **financial leverage**:

- Material Recovery Facility: GCC contributed 50% of the total cost for construction
- School-based DRR: schools contributed 15-50%
- Hand-washing basins: households contributed all labour
- Model latrines: households contributed labour
- Drainage cleaning (first round): ward council contributed 30% to the cost and the community added their labour
- Reinforcing the access road to the dump: WDCC and World Vision shared the overall costs.

In sum, this financial leverage implies efficiency: each Taka (1) invested in tangibles turned into results worth more than that one Taka (1+x).

Finally, it should be noted that the project was able to harness numerous **synergies**: many activities were coordinated and well-aligned with other players in Ershadnagor (such as World Vision). The WDCC, originally initiated by the ward councillor, proved effective as a coordination forum.

The nexus approach between the UER and the Covid-19 recovery project was another synergy: after all, it would have been much more difficult to implement that project if the UER had not had a team, networks, and data to begin with.

6. Sustainability

The sustainability of an intervention's outcomes largely depends on a strong sense of local ownership - local actors' **willingness** and **capacity** to continue running or maintaining them. Neither willingness nor capacity is a fixed given (fig. 22).

Local actors' **willingness** usually is a function of

a) perceived relevance (did an activity address a community concern?),
b) the perceived benefit-cost ratio (did an activity generate tangible benefits, how much input is needed to maintain these, and do the benefits justify the costs?), and
c) process ownership (did local actors invent, steer, participate, accept or reject the underlying process?).

Similarly, local actors' **capacity** can be broken down into the following aspects:

d) funds and inputs (do beneficiaries have the time and money to sustain the outcome?),
e) skills and capabilities (do they have the required technical skills?),
f) structure and routines (do solid organisational structures underpin the outcome?), and
g) organisational resilience (will beneficiaries be able to adapt after a shock, such as the death of a local leader?).

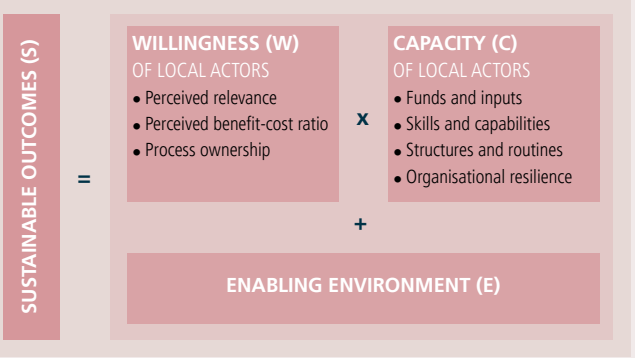
In addition to willingness and capacity, the strength of an **enabling environment** (next-tier government support, frameworks) also plays a role. Applying this analytical frame, how did the outcomes of the UER project fare?

In terms of **willingness**, the first observation is that as the project addressed issues that had been raised by the community, people view the project outcomes as mostly relevant. Strong process ownership is also noted - in particular with the WDCC and ward councillor. To varying degrees, the community was involved in identifying needs, implementing solutions, and in monitoring or the provision of feedback.

In creating a solid waste management system, the project delivered both tangible and direct benefits (cleaner streets and drainages) as well as protective benefits (reduced risk of water logging). Given the high frequency of water logging in the past as well as a good understanding of the link between littering and water logging, the willingness to maintain the SWM system is seen as very high.

It should also be noted that the project achieved a critical mass of norm adopters, which is both essential in terms of effectiveness (there would be limited benefit if a large share of residents continued littering) and in creating peer pressure. The ultimate benchmark for sustainability of new behaviours (non-littering) is when others expect you to adhere to the norm (and tell you off if you don't). The three zero-waste streets are strong cases of this critical mass; their coverage is worth expanding (streets adjacent to the visited zero-waste street already copied the approach).

Fig. 22 | **Sustainability building blocks**



While adoption of the waste collection system made strong inroads to that end of embedded norms, the same cannot be said for waste segregation. The benefits of composting and recycling are commonly understood, but the share of people actually segregating waste is only around 30%. In a way, this may be unsurprising: while everyone benefits from waste being removed, the benefits of waste segregation are less visible: they are out of sight once the waste has been taken away.

Tribute to demand-driven and locally grounded delivery and considering the evidence from all resilience stars, FGDs, KIIs and the staff reflection workshop, it is evident that the willingness to sustain overall outcomes is high.

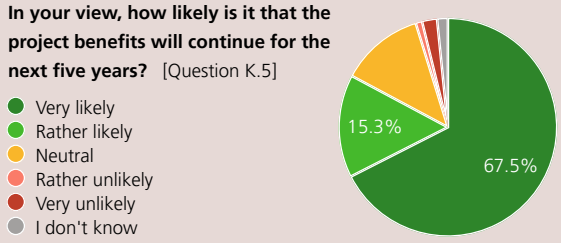
Regarding **capacity**, the situation is more diverse. Most community-based entities have been well-trained and have the technical skills to sustain their activities and roles. Structures and routines are well-established. The web of these entities (CC, BMC, WDCC) are seen as mutually reinforcing, and there is a demand for their continued engagement.

The key issue concerns future funding: for instance, there are no allocations for community cluster volunteers, who currently receive a small per diem for facilitating their sessions. It is not yet clear in how far these costs can be covered in future.

The WDCC in particular will need to ensure that future ward budgets are able to cover the activities planned by itself and the BMCs. By far the biggest challenge in terms of funding concerns the solid waste management system, which currently

Fig. 23 | **Positive community outlook**

In your view, how likely is it that the project benefits will continue for the next five years? [Question K.5]



operates at a loss. As shown in the box below, merely raising waste collection fees is unlikely to suffice - a renewed push may be needed to also extend the number of households who pay their fees.

The concept of an **enabling environment** has been a strong inherent design feature of the UER project: better connections between ward and Gazipur City Corporation and various departments (e.g. higher utilisation of social safety nets) was a strong focus of the project, as described earlier.

While Ershadnagor has indeed been put on GCC's radar, questions remain: the ward councillor is an outspoken advocate for the needs of his ward, but to what extent will GCC provide continued support, given its own capacity constraints? The GCC support to the ward is undoubtedly stronger than it had been. In terms of waste management, the co-funding for and endorsement of the MRF is a huge success. Yet, to what extent will the GCC trucks remove the waste? One GCC informant said GCC had no scheduled waste removal service from Ershadnagor - but if people complained, GCC would remove the waste.

The clear improvement of the vertical linkages between ward and city corporation is nascent: in the absence of clear frameworks, efforts should be placed on consolidating the achievements so far. Ideally, the BDRCS district unit should play an accompanying role in this process. Although it attended meetings with GCC so far, a more proactive role would be required, which in turn would necessitate more radical capacity enhancements than achieved by the UER project (i.e. expansion of the staff and volunteer base as well as systematic fundraising).

In summary, there is strong potential of UER outcomes being sustained. These will, however, require efforts to consolidate central aspects that are highlighted in chapter 8.

Sustaining the system: don't throw it away

The SWM system is at a loss: in 2021, it had an operating loss of BDT 764,000 (CHF 8,400). Simply raising the monthly fee from BDT 50 to 70 will not be enough: assuming that all other factors remain unchanged, there would still be an annual loss of BDT 270,000 (CHF 2,970).

In principle, one could either a) reduce expenditures, b) increase income, or c) combine these measures in some form. For simplicity, let us exclude options a) and c) for now (the main way to save costs would be abandoning waste segregation, as the income from compost and recyclables is marginal (CHF 300/year) while associated labour is high).

Increasing income

How then, can we increase income? We could either

i) raise monthly fees,
ii) seek to expand the pool of fee-payers, or
iii) combine these measures.

Currently, not everybody pays, and this free-rider problem implies that others must pay more. If all households paid the fee every month, **BDT 51** would cover the costs (with a very minor profit). Conversely, if the average number of fee-payers stayed the same (2,058), a fee of **BDT 81** would be required. Having considered these two scenarios for comparison, there are three suggested middle-ground options:

- Increase of fee-payers by 10% (2,264 HH) and the monthly fee to BDT 75 (minor annual surplus: BDT 38,600, CHF 424), or
- Increase fee-payers by 20% and fee to BDT 70 (slightly higher surplus: BDT 75,000, CHF 823), or
- Increase fee payers by 20% and fee to BDT 75 (annual surplus: BDT 223,000, CHF 2,450).

See further details for these scenarios in appendix D. The last option may be the most promising because even with a concerted drive to increase the share of fee-payers (by promoting good behaviour and target free-riders - e.g., "do your part - your fees keep Ershadnagor clean"), a 20% increase in people actually paying their fees consistently is not guaranteed. Furthermore, a small operating surplus is desirable to cover future replacement costs and investments.

It is advisable that WDCC annually review the fees to ensure that costs are covered and that the service can be sustained for the benefit of all.

In terms of waste segregation and associated composting/recycling efforts, the promotion of better practices should be renewed. Yet, WDCC and the project should refrain from banking on such increases, considering their minor contribution of overall income.

SECTION C | **MOVING FORWARD**

7. Lessons learnt

Learning from past experience and applying the lessons in the future is a powerful way to continuously enhance programming and to maximise impact. Understanding what worked (and why) allows replication. Knowing what did not work (and why) offers a basis for modification.

So what can we learn from the UER project experience? Let us look at three key lessons as well as influencing factors.

Key lesson 1:
Robust context assessments pay off and enable demand-driven delivery.
Needs were assessed through a baseline ahead of the actual project — in fact, the findings helped shape the project and put the team on terra nova: despite limited organisational experience in solid waste management, SRC and BDRCS designed a project that featured SWM in response to the needs that had been identified by the community. Throughout the implementation, studies and technical assessments were conducted to inform detailed solutions, and enable timely modifications where needed.

Key lesson 2:
Connectedness is king: urban programming requires very strong stakeholder engagement.
Facilitating and fostering connections within the ward as well as between ward and external players (particularly Gazipur City Corporation) proved effective. The UER project strengthened community capacity and helped put Ershadnagor on the GCC radar. The experience shows that patience, persistence, and a good understanding of government structures and processes is required.

The ward councillor, elected a year before the project, also played a key role in linking his ward with the City Corporation.

Key lesson 3:
Solid waste management can combine tangible and protective benefits but require a long breath.
Managing waste is complex, particularly when there is little tradition of a system. The project investment in technical expertise (external consultant) and the team's strong willingness to learn along the way are commended upon.

The combination of tangible/direct and protective/indirect benefits are a powerful factor towards sustainability: tangibles are ongoing while the protectives materialise only in the event of a hazard (when heavy rainfall does not lead to water-logging).

Critical mass is required to render the system effective. Strong efforts in awareness-raising yielded results in terms of using the solid waste system. With regard to waste segregation, further progress is needed.

Influencing factors
Several aspects helped shape the performance of the UER project. Collating information from all analytical tools, these are listed below.

Positive factors
- An experienced project team with high levels of motivation and dedication to raising resilience is seen as a key factor.
- A relatively high level of social capital in the ward proved a good foundation for collective action.
- Strengthening the role of women: the project encouraged women's participation and unleashed very strong engagement. Women were the drivers behind many activities, such as the community cluster sessions.
- Rounded and nuanced delivery: the project covered a comprehensive set of activities, covering all dimensions of resilience (to varying degrees).
- Support to Covid-affected households was appreciated and helped reinforce trust in BDRCS and the project.
- High density of interactions between project team and the community and its entities.
- Supportive role of the BDRCS Gazipur unit leadership.

Negative factors
- Covid-19 posed challenges in terms of facilitating meetings. Related school closures limited the length of engagement.
- Limited availability of Unit-level officer (staff turnover) seen as a factor behind the lack of more systematic improvements at the City unit.

8. Recommendations

Having explored numerous lessons from the UER project experience, let us turn to follow-up action. Two groups of recommendations are offered — the first focussing on immediate action to help consolidate results (part 8.1), and the latter on general aspects to be considered in future programming (part 8.2). In addition, note that more strategic aspects for urban programming are covered in the sister report 'Priorities, Partners, Pathways'.

8.1 Consolidating results

Commendably, it has already been decided to extend the UER project by three months to the end of June 2022. This enables a concerted effort to render results more sustainable and to address some gaps. A suggested to-do-list is provided below, with items ranked by priority.

A.1 Raise the fees, reduce free-riders.
Everyone benefits from solid waste management, but not everyone pays. If nothing is done to reduce operating losses, everyone looses out as the system will fall apart. That basic truth must be shared. Effectively, every fee-payer subsidises every free rider with BDT 30 per month.

The various models in appendix D can be used as guidance for the determination of appropriate fees. As discussed in ch. 6, raising the fees to anything lower than BDT 81 will be insufficient on its own unless the share of free-riders (currently 37.7%) is also reduced.

WDCC should take the lead in elaborating two inter-related aspects: first, what should be the new rate to eliminate operating losses (the service should in fact generate a surplus to account for future replacement costs), and second, what is the best strategy to reduce free-riding? This should be based on a brief analysis as to why people do not pay, and then address the reasons. For instance, WDCC could consider a lower rate for the most vulnerable, as long as criteria for that lower rate can be easily verified (e.g., single-headed households).

A.2 Advocate for more consistent waste removal and drainage cleaning.
While the waste collection from households to the temporary transfer stations (and soon to the MRF) works reasonably well, no regime exists thus far to remove the waste from transfer sites to the central landfill site. Every day, 8 tons of waste are added, and even though the use of organic waste for compost production and the separation of recyclables reduces that

amount, around 4.8 tons of waste is added daily. In the new MRF site, there was a one-off waste removal as part of MRF earthworks, but the lack of consistent waste removal means that mounds of waste will keep growing. The ward councillor expressed concerns over the lack of waste removal by GCC.

The GCC SWM Officer admitted that there were no plans in place to remove waste from Ershadnagor, and pointed out that GCC only had enough trucks to take about 1,740 tons to landfill, out of an estimated 10,000 tons generated across the GCC territory each day. If people from the ward complained, however, GCC would send trucks to take the waste away.

This situation links to a bigger issue that seeks a solution (see recommendations under 8.2). For now, the UER project team should support the councillor and WDCC to advocate for a regular waste removal from the MRF. At least one small truck (6 ton capacity) should service Ershadnagor each day (which would suffice for UER's target blocks 3,5, and 6). Advocacy efforts should furthermore be directed towards a more frequent (and regular) cleaning of drainages by GCC to prevent clogging and resulting water-logging (see also A.5).

A.3 Closely monitor MRF construction and initial operation.

After a long delay, MRF construction started in late January. The UER team and WDCC should monitor construction and immediately raise any concerns with GCC, so that operations can begin at this new site ahead of project conclusion.

A.4 Dramatically increase efforts to promote waste segregation.

Systematic waste segregation holds a lot of promise to reduce the amount ending up in landfill. While it is common for households across Bangladesh to produce their own compost, a systematic approach is all but common, and the UER project is commended upon for creating such a system. It is new, indeed. The ward councillor mentioned not without pride that "we're the only ward in Gazipur with inbuilt waste segregation."

There is a catch: while all residents benefit from waste being collected, nobody benefits directly from waste segregation. Throwing waste into two separate buckets is not hard, but people need to understand the ulterior benefit of doing so, and embrace the practice.

Waste collectors report that around 30% of households segregate waste. But on two rounds of observing waste collectors, the central divider in the carts (organic waste is meant to go on one side, inorganic waste on the other) was missing. Some attachment points for dividers were broken. Waste collectors said that even those who do segregate, don't do it well. Some proposed to have a fee of BDT 50 for segregators and BDT 100 for non-segregators to give an incentive. While such a system would be difficult to implement (who monitors?), it is clear that more work is needed to promote waste segregation.

To be clear: the system would not fall apart without higher rates of segregation, but it would call the design of the MRF into question and negate some of the environmental and economic benefits the project had aimed for.

Awareness-raising efforts so far have been effective in a) making people understand the process (85.5% say they understand what happens to the waste after it has been collected), and b) perceive waste segregation as the 'right thing to do'. The fact that the number of survey respondents claiming to segregate waste and having two buckets in place (69.6%) is more than twice the actual numbers (31%) indicates a high level of social desirability.

Yet, mere awareness does not always transcend into action. In order to sustain waste segregation, WDCC and the project team should explore the most appropriate ways for renewed efforts. It needs to make sure that dividers are present in all carts, should encourage waste collectors to praise those who 'do the right thing' and remind those who don't. And it should consider effective means to achieve 'critical mass'. This may include competitions and awards, the use of local champions, and CC sessions to recall the benefits of waste segregation.

A.5 Enhance the management of drainages.

One of the starting points of the project was water-logging. Identified by the community as a major issue back in 2018, the UER project looked into the cause and therefore established the SWM system. The visual inspection of the drainages showed indeed that they were less polluted than they had been in 2018, and also less polluted than those in the non-target wards in Ershadnagor's south-eastern half.

Yet, their condition is not perfect, and 53.1% of survey respondents say that drainage cleaning was insufficient. After an initial big clean-up operation that involved the broad community, there is a risk that some water-logging may occur again in future if drainage cleaning is not improved. The ward councillor argued that GCC should allocate more funding for regular cleaning.

To ensure well-targeted cleaning, it would be useful if WDCC (or WDMC) monitored the drainage conditions ahead of the annual monsoon season, and then prioritised sections for cleaning ahead of the heavy monsoon rainfalls.

A **specific technical issue** concerns the new sections of drainages that are sealed under concrete slabs of sidewalks and paths. These cannot be accessed and will be very difficult to clean without special technical equipment. To prevent this problem, simple grids should be installed at inflow points that catch solid matter. These grids should then be cleaned at scheduled intervals.

A.6 Facilitate a consolidation process with community-based entities.
The UER project has been grounded in its implementation through community-based entities such as the WDCC and BMC, and well-coordinated with all local players. In addition to the priorities listed in A.1-A.5, other aspects that may require consolidation should be explored through a dedicated workshop: what elements need further strengthening, how can these be strengthened, and what role can the UER project play in its final five months?

BMCs and WDCC have emerged as effective and vocal community-based entities and trained in numerous aspects by the project team. They are well-connected and enjoy strong support by Ershadnagor's ward councillor. Yet, there may be gaps that could not be fully assessed during this evaluation. One question concerns the continued facilitation of community cluster sessions: the well-trained CC volunteers are motivated and committed. They currently receive a small fee for their work. How can they be paid in the future?

One of the WDCC members raised the idea of a revolving community fund. Although this may be promising, such a fund would likely require sound preparation that may not be feasible in the remaining five months. Alternatives could feature the inclusion of this aspect in ward budgets and/or utilisation of operating surpluses (if available - see A.1).

8.2 Building on the UER foundation

Moving beyond the remaining implementation period of the UER project, let us consider the implications that directly relate to the UER project and possible follow-up (for more general aspects of urban programming by SRC and BDRCS, see the sister report 'Priorities, partner, possibilities'.

B.1 Stay in Gazipur.
Leaving Gazipur in mid-2022 would be a waste. Through countless meetings and ongoing dialogue with Gazipur City Corporation and others, SRC and BDRCS have developed relations and invested transaction costs that have yet to recuperate its full 'return on investment'. The experience in Ershadnagor has been promising in the sense that a model approach of demand-driven as well as locally grounded and rounded delivery has proved effective at raising resilience. At the same time, any such model that targets 3,300 households in half a ward cannot be seen as much more than a pilot.

That pilot proving effective, it is time for scaling up (see B.4 below). Due to the density of effective government layers and functional divisions in urban areas (as imperfect as they may be), it is indispensable to work with government, and this work takes time. SRC and BDRCS have laid the foundation, but have yet to build a bigger house.

B.2 Plug into GCC plans.
As a city corporation formed only in 2013, GCC still has many organisational issues, as its CEO frankly admits. It would be useful to engage with GCC in 'masterplanning' at a high level: what are the key needs and focus areas that BDRCS could support? Waste management in slums (the waste collection part at community level, as set up in UER) would be an obvious entry point, given UER expertise on the one hand and massive GCC capacity gaps on the other. 'Plugging into plans' would furthermore offer great potential in terms of tapping into local budgets, thereby offering more consistent co-funding as practiced for the MRF construction in Ershadnagor.

B.3 Transform the Unit: get urban-ready.
The UER project helped develop RCY teams and invested in training of the BDRCS Gazipur unit. Its leadership also attended key meetings and supported project delivery more broadly. Yet, it is also evident that the unit punches below its potential. In an area of 4 million residents and huge economic activity, a branch could have far-reaching services, a wide network of professional volunteers (beyond RCY), and a robust office team with excellent fundraising and communication efforts.

At present, it has none of the above. Getting urban-ready should entail a much deeper process that includes staffing and resource development. The Unit should be at the core of links with GCC (see recommendation B.2 above).

B.4 Retain the logic but scale up.
At the community level, the logic of demand-driven delivery and grounding in community-based entities should be retained. At the same time, the scale of future interventions should be upsized: covering multiple slums across wards would not only increase leverage with GCC (the UER project covered 0.4% of the GCC population) but may in fact harness economies of scale, as argued in chapter 5. If models such as SWM, social and financial inclusion and indeed resilience overall could be taken to scale without losing its quality, the UER project and its transaction costs in connectedness and innovation would have truly paid off.

9. Conclusion

There is great fanfare about the 'urban' focus. Look at project titles, donor calls, guidelines, strategy papers. In development jargon, 'urban' is now being used as a noun. Supporting the most vulnerable is at the heart of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, no matter where they live. And with many migrants moving to cities being vulnerable (often not having the same social support networks they had in rural origins), the Movement's mandate to work in urban contexts is undisputed.

But what exactly does working in urban contexts mean? Despite the fanfare, the Movement's practical understanding of programming implications is rather nascent. How, for instance, do you target and engage communities? What are the issues, the opportunities?

Let us highlight a **caveat** before reviewing the full value of the Urban Empowerment and Resilience project for future programming: Ershadnagor is not a typical slum with recent migrants in desolate conditions. Most people grew up here and have strong networks.

At respective baselines, the social capital index scores were identical for Ershadnagor and rural Gaibandha (a 'very high' 0.91). Social trust as well as high levels of mutual support and collective action are powerful enablers of community-based programming. What worked in Ershadnagor may not work as easily in less cohesive settings.

Yet, the UER project offers key insights.

First, the urban context as such is not an impediment to raising resilience. The longitudinal comparison shows an increase from 0.53 (medium) to 0.70 (high). The difference between base- and endline scores (+0.176) is almost the same as in Gaibandha (+0.178). On six of the ten resilience dimensions, the targeted 25% increase was exceeded.

Second, the sound assessment of needs is a key success factor. Whereas many project proposals are based on quick assessments framed by donor calls (with more detailed baseline studies only ensuing during early implementation), the UER project was only developed at a time when the baseline had been completed. Sequencing is all but trivial.

Furthermore, the project team consistently assessed many technical aspects to guide and refine implementation. In the same vein, the robust assessment of Covid-19 impact enabled a well-targeted recovery project. An alliterative reminder: use detailed data to develop demand-driven delivery.

Third, addressing causes (rather than symptoms) may take a long breath but is better geared for lasting impact. Following the community-driven identification of water logging as a key issue, SRC and BDRCS are commended upon for exploring and then addressing the cause, despite limited organisational expertise in solid waste management. It could have pre-positioned sand bags to address the symptom but attacked the cause instead.

In developing a solid waste management system, it also combined both tangible and protective benefits. The technical innovations in solid waste management, slum-suitable latrines, safe water testing, as well as the piggyback approach of added recovery should enter the urban playbook.

Finally, there is the issue of 'connectedness'. Perhaps the most important insight for urban spaces is the extremely important role of connections. Cities are systems of systems; one needs to understand how they work and interact. The project strengthened the connections within the ward (e.g., WDCC, BMC, CC), and facilitated linkages between ward and city corporation through political, administrative and technical channels. Embedding city corporations is pivotal. The project furthermore connected citizens to the government directly: it raised knowledge of access channels and facilitated the enrolment of eligible persons to existing social safety net programmes.

So where do these insights leave us?

In the **short term** (next 5 months), the priority is in consolidation of key results, such as raising fees and reducing the number of free-riders of the solid waste management system.

In the **medium term** (3-5 years), BDRCS and SRC should continue their engagement in Gazipur. Taking the UER approach to scale and plugging into GCC masterplanning more broadly can tap into the potential of local funding and increase impact. This must entail more substantial capacity-strengthening of the BDRCS branch, thereby unleashing its potential for a sustained BDRCS role in urban Gazipur.

In the **long run** (5-20 years), BDRCS and its Movement partners should aim for a far greater role in urban Bangladesh. In the sister report to this evaluation, we will explore priorities, partners, potential and pathways.

The UER project has piloted innovations with diligence, patience, responsiveness, and a focus on quality — helping to render Ershadnagor more resilient.

Now, think bigger.

Clean, connected.

How a slum raised its resilience.

BANGLADESH RED CRESCENT SOCIETY
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