

Transforming Coastal Lives

Quarterly Newsletter of the RHL Project



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We are pleased to present the fourth volume of the *Resilient Homestead and Livelihood Support to the Vulnerable Coastal People of Bangladesh (RHL) Project* Newsletter, highlighting key achievements from April to June 2025.

This quarter has been particularly impactful. From training hundreds of field staff and local masons to constructing climate-resilient houses, the RHL Project continues its mission to build a safer, more inclusive, and adaptive future for communities on the frontlines of climate change. The resilience of RHL houses was once again proven during Cyclone Shukti, as they remained safe while thousands of nearby houses suffered damage. Our livelihood interventions also gained significant traction. Crab farming, saline-tolerant vegetable cultivation, and slatted goat houses are being scaled up with strong community engagement. The progress we have made reaffirms that climate resilience is not just about structures, it is about people. As we move forward, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our implementing entities, partners, and communities for their tireless commitment.

Happy Reading!



The first session of the Refresher Training

RHL project organizes refresher training for 18 Implementing Entities

To address the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh's coastal regions, PKSF has been implementing the *Resilient Homestead and Livelihood Support to the Vulnerable Coastal People of Bangladesh (RHL)* project across seven coastal districts since August 17, 2023.

As part of the initiative, the RHL project organized a comprehensive series of refresher trainings, titled “Training on Project Implementation and Climate-Change Issues,” for staff of its Implementing Entities (IEs) during April–May 2025. The objective was to strengthen project implementation capacity and align partner organizations with updated guidelines and procedures. Dr. Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed, Deputy Managing Director of PKSF, inaugurated the training program. In his remarks, Dr. Fazle Rabbi emphasized the importance of continuous capacity building and knowledge exchange to address field-level challenges and maximize project impact.

157 staff from 18 IEs participated in the training, held in six batches across regional centers in Khagrachhari, Patuakhali, and Jashore. Each three-day training featured 13 sessions covering technical, financial, and programmatic areas, designed to enhance participants' understanding of climate-resilient housing, homestead gardening, crab hatcheries, M&E frameworks, and financial reporting. Through technical presentations, group work, case discussions, and Q&A sessions, participants engaged in peer learning and collaborative problem-solving.

Sessions covered a wide range of topics - from climate financing and *Community Climate Action Group (CCAG)* facilitation to crab cultivations and value chains and environmental safeguards. A special focus was placed on improving financial management and reporting, with practical exercises on documentation and voucher preparation to ensure compliance with PKSF financial and audit standards. The training



Participants of the Refresher Training in their group work

also introduced improved practices in communication and branding, including social media engagement, knowledge management, and standardized reporting. Pre- and post-training assessments revealed a marked improvement in participants' confidence and clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Key recommendations from the training included organizing annual follow-up sessions, incorporating live demonstrations in future trainings, and promoting documentation of success stories for wider learning and replication.

By building the capacity of its partners, the RHL project continues to empower frontline staff to implement innovative, climate-resilient solutions in some of Bangladesh's most vulnerable coastal communities.

RHL Project Trains Local Masons and Engineers on Climate-Resilient Housing

Sheikh Nur Mohammad, a mason from Bagerhat, said, "I have been working in construction for more than 15 years, but this is the first time I understood the science behind why certain standards matter. Now I feel more confident in building homes that can truly withstand cyclones and flooding."



Training on Climate-Resilient Housing

The RHL Project provides climate-resilient houses to climate vulnerable poor and extremely poor communities in Bangladesh's coastal areas. Designed to withstand cyclones, floods, and salinity, these houses ensure safety and sustainability for vulnerable populations. As part of the initiative, the project also focuses on enhancing the capacity of local builders.

The project organized six batches of training on "Climate Resilient Housing Standards, Design, and Materials" from 15 April to 21 May 2025. 152 participants, including 130 masons and 22 Community Development Officers from 18 implementing partner organizations took part in the training.

The sessions emphasized disaster-resilient houses design, material selection, and quality control. Participants learned about environmentally friendly construction practices and the importance of standard ratios, joint thickness, and proper curing. They also discussed field-level challenges and solutions related to material quality and site conditions.

Some challenges were observed, including difficulty in grasping technical content by less literate participants and the unavailability of eco-friendly materials in some regions. Despite this, the training laid a strong foundation for safer housing construction.

By building local skills, the RHL project is empowering communities to implement climate-resilient solutions and protect lives and livelihoods in coastal Bangladesh.

RHL project Resilient Housing: Safe and Sustainable home during disasters



Plinth raised climate resilient houses at Charfassion upazila of Bhola district immediate after a heavy rain

To address the adverse impacts of climate change in the coastal regions of Bangladesh, PKSf is implementing the RHL project. The five-year project is being implemented in seven coastal districts. It aims to reduce risks to the lives and assets of climate-vulnerable communities and to create opportunities for improved and sustainable alternative livelihoods.

As part of the initiative, the project is constructing 3,000 climate-resilient houses and homesteads for poor and ultra-poor families living in coastal areas. So far, 700 houses and homesteads have been completed, and beneficiaries are already residing in them. These beneficiaries have begun to gain resilience against natural disasters.

Over the past one and a half decades (2007 to 2025), Bangladesh has experienced 12 cyclones in the month of May alone, all of which struck the coastal belt. Most recently, on 29 May 2025, Cyclone *Shokti* crossed the coastal regions of Bangladesh as a deep depression. Due to strong winds, prolonged rainfall, and waterlogging, over 50,000 houses were damaged in the seven coastal districts, with more than 25,000 homes submerged under water. In contrast, the climate-resilient houses of the RHL project, constructed on land raised 4 to 4.5 feet above the ground, remained protected and safe from strong wind and flooding. As a result, the 700 families residing in these houses remained protected. In many cases, neighbors sought shelter in these houses, and several families were even able to shelter their livestock inside safely.



Climate-resilient house of Naitu Begum.
Borhanuddin, Bhola

Amena Begum, a resident of one such RHL house in Dacope Upazila of Khulna district, shared, “Every year, cyclones made our lives more unbearable. But this year, we did not suffer any damage in our new home—something we coastal people never imagined before.”



Jahanara Begum standing in front of her climate resilient house

The houses built under the RHL project not only ensure protection during disasters but can also serve as private shelters. In addition to constructing climate-resilient houses, the project supports the beneficiaries with sanitary latrines, safe water storage facilities, solar power systems, tree plantation, and vegetable gardening on their homesteads.

Stakeholder consultation meeting on sustainable crab farming held

A stakeholder consultation meeting on sustainable crab farming was held at Borhanuddin Upazila of Bhola district. The event was organized by Grameen Jano Unnayan Sangstha (GJUS) with support from the RHL project.

The meeting brought together local crab farmers, technical officials from the RHL Project, and other relevant stakeholders to promote climate-resilient and environmentally friendly crab farming practices. Participants discussed sustainable production techniques, local challenges, market linkages, and adaptive strategies in the face of increasing climate risks.



Stakeholder consultation meeting on sustainable crab farming

Mr. Zakir Hossain Mohin, Executive Director of GJUS, chaired the meeting. In his remarks, he said, “Crab farming has immense potential in this coastal region. By adopting sustainable techniques and strengthening farmer-market linkages, we can help build climate-resilient livelihoods and improve the economic well-being of the local population.”

Local farmers shared firsthand experiences, pointing to the challenges they face with disease outbreaks, saline water management, and unstable pricing. They also provided feedback on the support needed to enhance productivity and sustainability. The RHL technical team addressed these concerns and highlighted upcoming capacity-building and financial support opportunities under the project. Participants agreed on piloting improved farming methods, exploring local hatchery options, and establishing a collective marketing system.

This initiative is expected to significantly contribute to the resilience of coastal livelihoods by promoting sustainable aquaculture, reducing dependency on traditional income sources, and improving adaptive capacity to climate change.

Discussion meeting on crab hatchery held



Discussion on Crab hatchery

To accelerate the establishment of small-scale crab hatcheries and the production of crablets in the Cox's Bazar region with project support and entrepreneur engagement, a discussion meeting was held on 15 May 2025. The project implementing entity COAST Foundation organized the meeting in Cox's Bazar. The meeting primarily focused on addressing existing challenges in crablet production within hatcheries and identifying necessary actions to resolve them.

The event was attended by representatives from *Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University*, *Noakhali Science and Technology University*, *Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute Cox's Bazar*, *Niribili Hatchery*, crab hatchery entrepreneurs supported under the project, and officials from *COAST Foundation* and *YPSA*.

At the beginning of the discussion, the purpose of the meeting was explained, followed by a round of introductions among participants. Dr. Abdullah Al Mamun, Professor, Department of Fisheries and Marine Science, Noakhali Science and Technology University presented research findings related to crab hatchery operations. The discussion highlighted several current problems in crablet production, and participating institutions shared their views on possible solutions. The meeting also addressed strategies for importing essential *Artemia* from Vietnam, which is crucial for crab hatcheries.

Identifying suitable entrepreneurs for crab hatcheries in the Cox's Bazar region remains a challenge. However, existing crab and *Artemia* farmers have shown greater interest in entering the hatchery sector. Although these farmers possess experience in crab and *Artemia* cultivation, their lack of technical knowledge on hatchery operations means they need to start from the basics. Conversely, those who have experience in hatchery operations or own shrimp hatchery facilities have shown limited interest in investing in crab hatcheries.

Locally produced *Artemia* has not yielded satisfactory results as feed for crablets. To address this, local suppliers of hatchery equipment, who import materials from various countries, are being encouraged to procure *Artemia* from Vietnam. If Vietnamese *Artemia* becomes available, crablet production in hatcheries is expected to become feasible.

Additionally, efforts have been made to establish communication with local universities

and research institutions to ensure regular testing of water quality, feed, and other hatchery inputs. These institutions may also be engaged in future project interventions related to crab hatchery development.

Orientation on resilient homestead held



Md. Lutfor Rahman, Executive Director of NGF is speaking with the beneficiaries of resilient housing

To acquaint the beneficiaries with the construction procedures, and compliance requirements outlined in the project guidelines, the RHL project organized an orientation with the newly selected beneficiaries of resilient house in Shyamnagar Upazila of Satkhira District. The event was hosted by the project's IE, Nowabbenki Gonomukhi Foundation (NGF), on 3 June 2025.

Md. Lutfor Rahman, Executive Director of NGF, chaired the event. He said, *“This initiative is not just about constructing houses; it’s about building a foundation for long-term resilience in the face of climate risks..”*

The meeting facilitated open dialogue on practical experiences in constructing resilient houses and explored collective ways to address the challenges. Several operational issues were discussed, including delays in transporting construction materials to remote areas,

complications related to legal land documentation, limited banking cooperation, budget variation among beneficiaries, and the exclusion of latrines and rainwater harvesting systems from the Bill of Quantities (BoQ) due to funding constraints.

Participants actively engaged in the discussion, raising concerns and seeking clarification on technical aspects of construction. One beneficiary remarked, *“Now that we better understand the process and our responsibilities, we are committed to working closely with NGF to make this a success.”*

NGF’s RHL project staff explained the root causes of these challenges and assured beneficiaries of ongoing efforts to find practical and sustainable solutions. They also underscored the importance of community cooperation in overcoming implementation hurdles.

RHL project organized training for 8,354 beneficiaries



Training participants: 8,354
Female Participants: 6,167
Male Participants: 1,285



Participants: 3,427
Female: 2,908
Male: 519



Participants: 1,851
Female: 2,214
Male: 297



Participants: 1,514
Female: 1,045
Male: 469

Gender desegregated data of training participants

Update from Ground

During the period the RHL project reached to 41,356 coastal people with different types of interventions and services, among them 6,821 are male, and 34,535 are female. Additionally, the project achieved the following milestones:

Design and building of homesteads



Uma Shankar standing with his son in front of their climate resilient homestead.

Following the overall target for designing and building 3000 climate-resilient homesteads, the RHL project constructed 1,040 resilient houses so far. 351 homesteads were constructed during the reporting period. Along with the construction of houses, the project provided a comprehensive package of rainwater harvesting system, an environment friendly twin pit offset latrine and a solar system based on the needs of individual beneficiary. 10% contribution against the total cost were born by the beneficiaries.

Homestead tree planting

So far, the project planted 219,434 climate-resilient trees in the beneficiary homesteads in the project areas. The plantation included a variety of species such as coconut, guava, sapodilla, wood apple, betel nut, and neem, contributing to both environmental

conservation and the livelihood needs of the communities. To support the healthy growth and protection of these trees, beneficiaries were also provided with garden trellis nets, ensuring enhanced care and sustainability of the planted trees.

Cultivation of saline tolerant vegetables



Beneficiary at her ginger garden

During the quarter, the project provided support to 10,311 beneficiaries with saline-tolerant vegetable cultivation practices in homestead areas. The support included seeds, plants, nets, and watering cans for cultivating ginger using bags. Beneficiaries have also begun growing a variety of crops, including tomatoes, eggplants, red amaranth, kangkong, and turnips, aimed at enhancing food security and livelihoods in areas affected by soil salinity.

Construction of slatted houses for goat/sheep rearing

To enhance hygiene, reduce disease risk among livestock, and contribute to better livelihoods



Slatted house for goat/sheep rearing.

for the beneficiaries, the project constructed 2,620 slatted houses for goat/sheep rearing during April to June 2025. So far, 7,352 houses have been constructed for goat/sheep rearing. Prior to the construction, beneficiaries were systematically selected and provided with training on the effective use and maintenance of the structures. The construction materials include concrete pillars, bamboo, wood, tin etc.

Development of crab Hatchery



Inside a crab hatchery in Cox's Bazar.

During the reporting period, the project provided support to develop one crab hatchery. Besides, construction work for three hatcheries is underway. Additionally, the project is working with hatchery owners in Cox's Bazar for developing crab hatcheries.

RHL project supports Crab Nurseries and Farmers



RHL supports crab farmers.

During this quarter, the project provided technical and financial support 114 new beneficiaries to establish crab nurseries.

During the period, the project provided technical and financial support to 1,847 new beneficiaries for crab farming in saline ponds. This initiative aims to enhance livelihoods and promote sustainable aquaculture practices in saline-prone areas.

Grievance Management and Knowledge Products

During the quarter, the project received 25 complaints from beneficiaries, among them 9 were submitted by female and 16 were by male. All of the complaints were resolved in consultation with respective beneficiaries. So far, 59 complaints have been launched by the beneficiaries, and 58 of them have been resolved.

Updates in Frames



Tree Plantation



Sift-shell Crab Farming



Goat rearing on slatted house



RHL project provides solar system on resilient houses



CCAG meeting



Crab farming

Story of change: New home brings a joyful Eid for Halima Khatun's family



Name: Halima Khatun

Age: 27

Occupation: Day Laborer

Location: Mothabari, Moharajpur,
Koyra, Khulna

For over ten years, Halima Khatun lived in a fragile hut made of bamboo and mud. Every monsoon brought fear. Every winter meant suffering. With two young sons, no secure roof, and limited means, she braved life's uncertainties in silence.

In 2025, Eid-ul-Adha arrived with a new chapter. Halima and her family celebrated the festival in their newly constructed **climate-resilient house**, built under the RHL Project. The house came equipped with a solar power system, an improved cooking

stove (ICS), a water tank, and sanitary latrine facilities - a complete shelter package tailored for vulnerable women-headed households.

Eid Preparations: A Home Transformed

The night before Eid, the family stayed up late cleaning and decorating their new home. Curtains were hung, walls were swept clean, and the smell of incense lingered through the air. *"For the first time, I had a proper kitchen to cook in,"* Halima said with pride. *"I made semai, polao, and chicken curry without fear of the stove tipping or the roof leaking."* Using her new improved cooking stove, Halima prepared the Eid meal. The boys helped their father hang paper decorations around the veranda. *"I helped Amma stir the semai,"* said her younger son, smiling. *"It's my favorite part of Eid!"*



Halima, standing in front of her old house



Halima's family wearing new dresses on Eid festival

Faith, Food, and Fellowship

On Eid morning, Halima's husband and sons performed their Eid prayers dressed in clean, new clothes. Halima offered her own prayers with peace in her heart, a rare moment of calm she hadn't experienced in years. Neighbors came over to exchange greetings and share sweets. The homestead, once a dream, became a symbol of dignity and belonging. Halima said, "Now people come to visit. They say it looks beautiful. My sons are so happy."

From Shelter to Strength

Halima's new home has brought visible changes in the family's health, safety, and confidence. With light from the solar panel, they study after sunset. "I want to become a doctor," said her elder son. "Now I can read at night, and I don't cough so much anymore." Halima is also thinking ahead.

A Festival of New Beginnings

Halima's story reflects the deeper impact of the RHL Project beyond physical infrastructure. Her homestead has become a space of healing, celebration, and aspiration. "This Eid was different," Halima concluded. "We had food, prayers, family, and safety. That's everything I ever wanted."

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