

First Yearly Report

(01 May 2023- 31 January 2024)

Journalist capacity on climate change reporting

Prepared by



24 March 2024

Context

Bangladesh, frequently mentioned as one of the most climate vulnerable countries, is not an exception to the fact that climate change is the greatest catastrophe facing humanity today.

Bangladesh is the seventh-riskiest country according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2020, despite contributing less than 0.5% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Climate catastrophes pose a grave threat to addressing the SDGs 1 to 5.

Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP), 2100 identified six hotspot zones based on natural hazards and challenges.

Being a significant stakeholder in the effort to achieve the SDGs, the media has a role to play through dissemination of its journalistic pieces and opinions to foster links between professionals, civil society, and audiences in search of sustainable solutions to the global problem of climate change. Nonetheless, many journalists today, especially those who reside in local climate-vulnerable areas, find it challenging to cover these concerns.

A recent study by MRDI found that the quality of coverage on energy and environment issues was constrained by an extreme lack of investigative and in-depth reports, poor sourcing practices, dependence on daily events and straight-jacket news stories covering the recent events, trends and developments on a topic. To break the trend, need-based capacity building, introducing new tools, techniques, and resources are essentially needed particularly in the climate vulnerable zones.

Thus, the project aims to enhance climate change reporting skills of the local correspondents of national news outlets and reporters of community news outlets located in climate hotspot zones of Bangladesh through production-based capacity building to: dig out the impact of climate change on environment, economy, life and livelihood; segregate the extent of impact in terms of gender and economic condition, develop skills in investigating use of climate fund (follow the money), and clearly understand climate vulnerability and related issues.

Project Objective

To enhance climate change reporting skills of the local correspondents of national news outlets and reporters of community news outlets located in climate hotspot zones of Bangladesh through production-based capacity building.

Reporting period: 01 May 2023 - 31 January 2024

Activity Performed

Activity 1- Training Content Development Meeting



A meeting was organised at MRDI office in Dhaka on 05 August 2023 inviting gatekeepers from newsroom and experts on the field of environment and climate change to discuss and finalise content for two upcoming training programmes designed specifically for journalists of climate hotspot zones across Bangladesh. 05 newsroom gatekeepers and an expert joined physically, and another expert joined online.

At the meeting, structure of the two three-day residential training sessions - first one for district correspondents of national news outlets and second one designed for reporters from community news outlets, were placed. The aims, expectations from the training, potential participant selection methods, and session topics were all discussed. The discussants at the meeting then offered their insights on the plan and proposed resource persons for the sessions.

The meeting participants then together identified a list of significant districts for potential reporter invitations. The shortlisted districts are Barguna, Patuakhali, Barisal, Bhola, Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Rajshahi, Noakhali, Chittagong, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, and Sunamganj.

Activity 2 - Training on Climate Change Reporting for national news outlet correspondents

A three-day training on climate change reporting was conducted at CCDB Hope Centre in Savar from 31 August - 3 September 2023. A total of 15 district correspondents of national news outlets from climate hotspot zones took part in the training.

The training covered various aspects including concepts of Climate Change and Environment, climate change reporting in Bangladesh, interactive sessions on understanding issues, use of Right to Information Act, accessing data from online sources and use of free tools to develop maps, interactives and analysing satellite images etc.



It also covered sessions on investigative journalism, interview techniques and there were practical sessions on how to turn an idea into a pitch form for submission of story idea to newsroom. The session also covered topics of climate justice and climate finance as well.

All the participants then submitted their story ideas as part of the application process to a mentorship that will support production of their in-depth and investigative story ideas.

Activity 3- Mentorship for national news outlet correspondents

The project provided mentorship support for 11 correspondents of national news outlets in transforming their story concepts into investigative pieces addressing climate change issues. This mentorship programme commenced on September 26, 2023, and extended through January 31, 2024.

Throughout this period, each of the mentees worked under a mentor who provided them with advice and guidance on developing the story using the skills mentees learned during a 3-day residential training organized earlier into practice.

In the course of the reporting timeframe, nine mentees successfully concluded their mentorship, resulting in the publication of a total of 10 stories. Two mentees were unable to complete the mentorship.

Activity 4- Training on Climate Change Reporting for reporters of community news outlets

A three-day training on climate change reporting was conducted at YWCA Centre in Dhaka from 05-07 September 2023. A total of 15 reporters of community news outlets from climate hotspot zones took part in the training.



The training covered various aspects including concepts of Climate Change and Environment, climate change reporting in Bangladesh, interactive sessions on understanding issues, use of Right to Information Act, accessing data from online sources and use of free tools to develop maps, interactives and analysing satellite images etc.

It also covered sessions on investigative journalism, interview techniques and there were practical sessions on how to turn an idea into a pitch form for submission of story idea to newsroom. The session also covered topics of climate justice and climate finance as well.

All the participants then submitted their story ideas as part of the application process to a mentorship that will support production of their in-depth and investigative story ideas.

Activity 5- Mentorship for reporters of community news outlets

The project provided mentorship support for 10 reporters of community news outlets in transforming their story concepts into investigative pieces addressing climate change issues. This mentorship programme commenced on September 26, 2023, and extended through January 31, 2024.

Throughout this period, each of the mentees worked under a mentor who provided them with advice and guidance on developing the story using the skills mentees learned during a 3-day residential training organized earlier into practice.

In the course of the reporting timeframe, nine mentees successfully concluded their mentorship, resulting in the publication of a total of 9 stories. One mentee was unable to complete the mentorship.