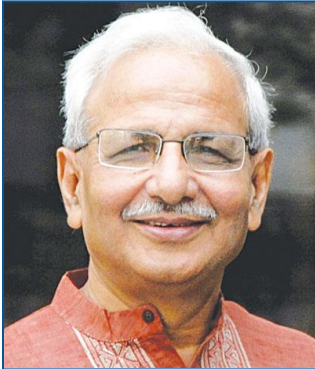


Message from The Country Director



Bangladesh and the world face enormous challenges. Yet, every day, we in The Hunger Project witness how when people are mobilized, organized and work together, they can meet these challenges.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many have referred to the “Three-C’s” – Conflict, Climate Change and COVID-19. To this, we add a fourth C – Corruption. During 2021, The Hunger Project had a positive impact on all Four C’s.

- Our People Against Violence Everywhere (PAVE) program intervened and mitigated more than 1000 political, religious and ethnic conflicts while our BRAVE program inspired you to follow principles of non-violence.
- Our new “Zero Cost” agriculture strategy helped farmers sustain production even as inflation increased.
- Our Coronavirus Resilient Villages program helped save lives and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in more than 2000 villages.
- Our program of “Infomediaries” has trained citizens to utilize Right to Information requests to halt petty corruption, and we have trained investigative journalists in every district to shed light on corrupt practices.

We continue to be the largest volunteer-based development organization in Bangladesh, and our hundreds of thousands of volunteers are well organized in **seven networks** of youth, women, concerned citizens and the very lowest income people in our country. Our volunteers are achieving transformative and sustainable change in their communities and in our nation.

In 2021 we marked our 30th anniversary, and we continued to support the collective action of grassroots people with the resources of generous individual investors and international donor agencies. In fact, we doubled our budget over 2020. We greatly appreciate this partnership and we will sustain this action for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) until the job is done.

Prof. Badiul Alam Majumdar, PhD
Global Vice-President and Country Director
The Hunger Project

Highlight: Massive use of Zoom!

COVID-19 continued to rage during 2021. Mobilizing and inspiring our volunteer networks was achieved through virtual gatherings. We utilized Facebook, WhatsApp groups as well as the mass media to sustain our momentum. To celebrate our 30th anniversary we held three giant Zoom calls, each with more than 1,000 participants, focused on our Animators, Youth and Women Leaders. These were attended by prominent guests, such as the British High Commissioner at our Youth celebration.

Our approach and our seven citizen networks

THP implements a gender-focused, community-led approach. Our “mantra” is: start with women, mobilize everyone, and make local democracy work. We mobilize and strengthen the capacity of people through workshops and training which are both transformative – awakening people to their rights and power – and educative, in terms of skills and knowledge. These networks (and the usually-Bangla acronyms by which they are known) start at the village level and are federated upwards to the upazila, district and national levels.

- BNN: Women Leaders, 10,000+ local women with in depth gender training
- NGCAF: Girl Child Advocacy Forum – an alliance of 300+ gender-focused organizations
- GSS: Ultra-poor self-help groups
- YEH: Youth Ending Hunger – 100,000 students in school-based groups
- SHUJAN: Citizens for Good Governance – respected citizens who advocate fair elections and non-partisan reforms -- for which THP is the secretariat
- PFGs: Peace Facilitator Groups at the Upazila level to detect, prevent and mitigate political, religious and ethnic conflicts
- VDT: Village Development Teams – representatives from all the networks who set local priorities, engage with local government and mobilize local action.

Our core program: SDG Unions

The Constitution of Bangladesh assigns nearly all the SDG-relevant functions to the Union Parishad – the level of democratic governance closest to the people. THP played an important role in pioneering reforms for greater citizen participation and social accountability, and we are demonstrating how, when implemented, this stronger partnership among elected representatives, public servants, civil society and the people as a whole can set and achieve SDG targets.

During 2021, we facilitated 157 SDG Unions across 21 districts and all 8 divisions. These Unions serve 3.5 million citizens mobilized by 23,000 volunteer animators. Outcomes achieved include:

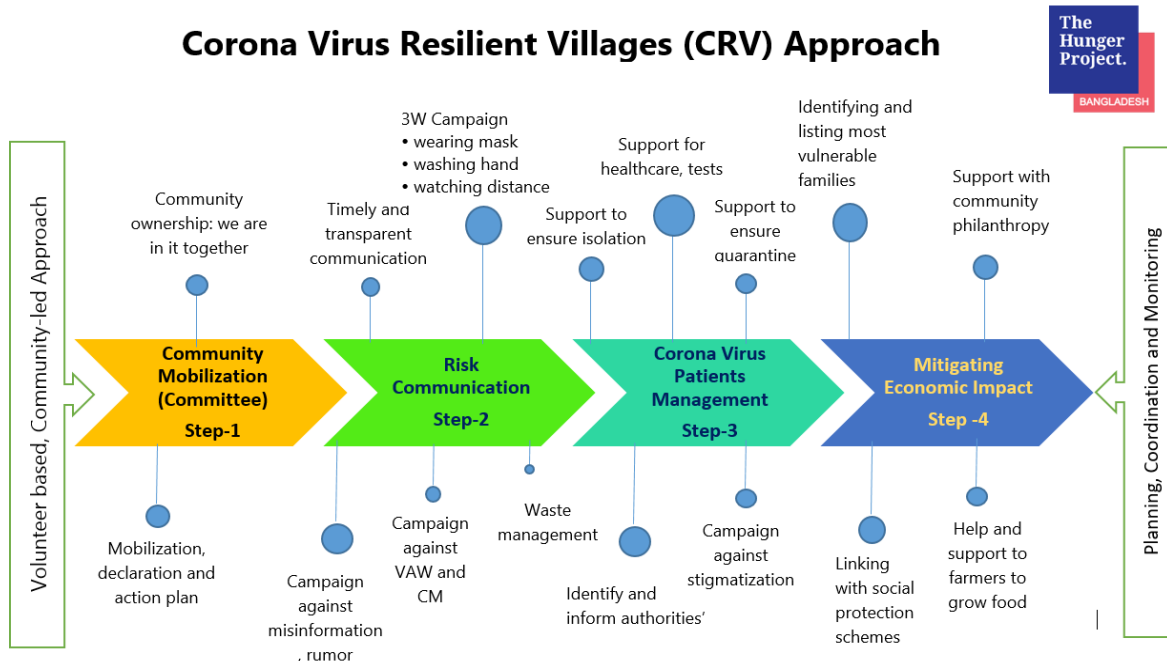
- Operating 30 adult literacy centers in 22 unions
- Testing 235 wells against arsenic contamination

- Immunizing 2508 children
- Launching 1,169 incoming generating projects
- Planting 53,139 trees
- Installing 326 tubewells

During 2021, the SDG Union strategy was funded by a consortium of Australian investors, the Jula Foundation and the Waajler Foundation.

Coronavirus Resilient Villages and Climate Change

During Covid, our SDG Unions adopted a highly successful four-step strategy to mobilize communities, communicate the risks consistent with WHO messaging, manage those infected and mitigate the economic impact.



During 2021, we recognized that this same approach can be adopted to bring together our various Climate Change adaptation and mitigation activities into a Climate Change Resilience Villages strategy which we will develop in 2022.

Our CRV volunteers carried out 1,800 events involving 1,064,139 participants, 48% female.

To address climate change, 947 campaigns were organized with 36,122 participants.

During 2021, CRV was funded by the Swiss (SDC) and Canadian (CLI) governments.

Action for Gender Equality

A key component of the SDG Union Strategy leverages the ability of trusted, knowledgeable local women leaders to engage households on fairly sensitive gender issues through “Courtyard Meetings.” During 2021, women leaders conducted courtyard meetings to promote:

- School Enrollment: 292 meetings for 4,943 people
- Health and nutrition: 2,069 meetings for 78,433 people
- WASH and Hygiene: 822 meetings for 9,996 people
- Birth registration: 801 meetings for 12,928 people
- Halting child marriage: 1,651 meetings for 24,552 people
- Halting gender-based violence: 592 meetings for 9,948 people
- Marriage registration: 306 meetings for 5,113 people

PAVE: People Against Violence Everywhere

The PAVE Program trains leaders from both parties along with civil society activists in the skills to detect, prevent and mitigate political, religious and ethnic conflicts that can lead to violence. These form Peace Facilitator Groups (PFG) of 20 members in 72 upazilas across 33 districts, and each PFG elects Peace Ambassadors who represent them at the district level Peace Ambassador Network.

PFGs facilitated political rivals to sign **Codes of Conduct** in 20 Upazilas committing to peaceful resolution of disputes. Opposition leaders enjoy greater political space in PAVE areas.

During 2021:

- 435 Peace Events were organized attended by 14,776 people
- 829 citizen and social harmony workshops were held attended by 43,611 people

During 2021, PAVE was supported by the British and American governments through subgrants with Democracy International and IFES.

Youth Ending Hunger (YEH): Environment and Social Harmony

Youth Mobilization has always been at the heart of THP, and in fact we were founded by students in 1991. In any given year, YEH mobilizes 100,000 male and female youth to take constructive actions to improve their communities and our nations.

A key partner for many years has been the British Council Active Citizens Program. In 2021, one of our YEH young ladies, Sadia Malia, won the award for best environmental initiative!

The National Endowment for Democracy supported a program to build youth leadership for pluralism and social harmony.

- The NED program trained 313 youth, majority female, as community facilitators.
- YEH supported 1,135 youth to launch social initiatives of their own design.
- 20,223 youth participated in 1,216 in-person meetings, following COVID protocols, and organized 107 citizen and social harmony workshops for 16,956 people.

PAR: Mobilizing the “Ultrapoorest”

The “ultrapoor”, of course, could be considered a demeaning development buzzword. Our program calls them **Peoples’ Researchers** in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) program. These often destitute individuals, primarily women, analyze their own condition to the point where they can identify their own solutions and form self-help groups to implement them.

During 2021:

- PAR organized 133 workshops involving 2,465 people, $\frac{2}{3}$ women.
- 30,724 people participated in 2,308 PAR meetings.
- 70 new self-help groups were formed, and 199 coordination meetings were held
- 43,467 participants in 1,816 self-help groups had mobilized 215,531,520 BDT (US\$ 2.5 million) – far exceeding the total budget of THP-BD.

No donor agencies have yet devoted funds to this amazing program, and we have the capacity to expand it greatly as a key component of the SDG Union Strategy.

SHUJAN: Citizens for Good Governance

In 1993, in the formative years of THP-BD, Mohammed Yunus pointed out that Bangladesh lacked the kind of “moral elite” that India enjoyed from its Gandhian era, but there were such people isolated within a generally corrupt environment. A unique contribution of THP could be to mobilize and organize their efforts.

To accomplish this, SHUJAN was established in 2002 and has played a key role in promoting fair elections and policy advocacy for reforms across the country. THP serves as its secretariat, and our country director serves as its Secretary.

SHUJAN volunteers are typically influential individuals at every level of society and play critical leadership roles in PAVE and the SDG Unions. There are 1,011 Shujan units comprising 22,529 Network Members in 656 unions, 382 upazilas across all 64 districts. These volunteer leaders are critical to the success and influence of PAVE and the SDG Union Strategy, and play a special role in terms of transparency in national and local elections. During 2021, SHUJAN organized:

- 119 committee meetings attended by 2,336 members
- 18 public celebrations for women’s rights
- 96 Peace Building Trainings
- 55 Peace Events attended by 3,545 people

Right2Grow

Right2Grow is a new, multi-country five year project supported by the Dutch government, for which THP-Netherlands is the prime and THP-Bangladesh is a partner. It's purpose is to decrease undernutrition of children under five in all its forms in Bangladesh by making sure that: 1) Communities demand and invest in basic social services and adopt good nutrition and WASH practices, jointly addressing barriers with private sector partners ; 2) Representative and empowered civil society organizations (CSOs) effectively navigate the civic space to advocate for leadership and good governance to prevent undernutrition; 3) National government and decentralized entities adopt and mainstream an integrated, multisectoral approach to undernutrition in policies, action plans and budget allocations, and ; 4) Donors and international development actors coordinate and collaborate along the humanitarian-development nexus to address the underlying determinants of undernutrition.

2021 was the inception year for the project. It is being implemented in 14 Unions of Dumuria Upazila of Khulna District.

Our Next 5-year Strategy

The first third of the SDG era was 2016-2020. COVID-19 made strategic planning nearly impossible in 2020, but THP globally set about the process of creating its next strategic plans.

We have declared our goal for 2026 is "3000 villages of 200 Unions in 20 Upazilas are fully mobilized to build as SDG Model Villages with particular focus on climate change, where people and their institutions will collaboratively act as agents of their own development, generating evidence for wider adoption of our strategy."