

A smiling woman wearing a red headscarf with a yellow floral pattern is holding several green tomatoes in her hand. She is standing in a lush green field, likely a tomato field, with many more green tomatoes visible on the plants around her. The background is filled with green foliage and wooden stakes supporting the plants.

The  
Hunger  
Project.

BANGLADESH

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

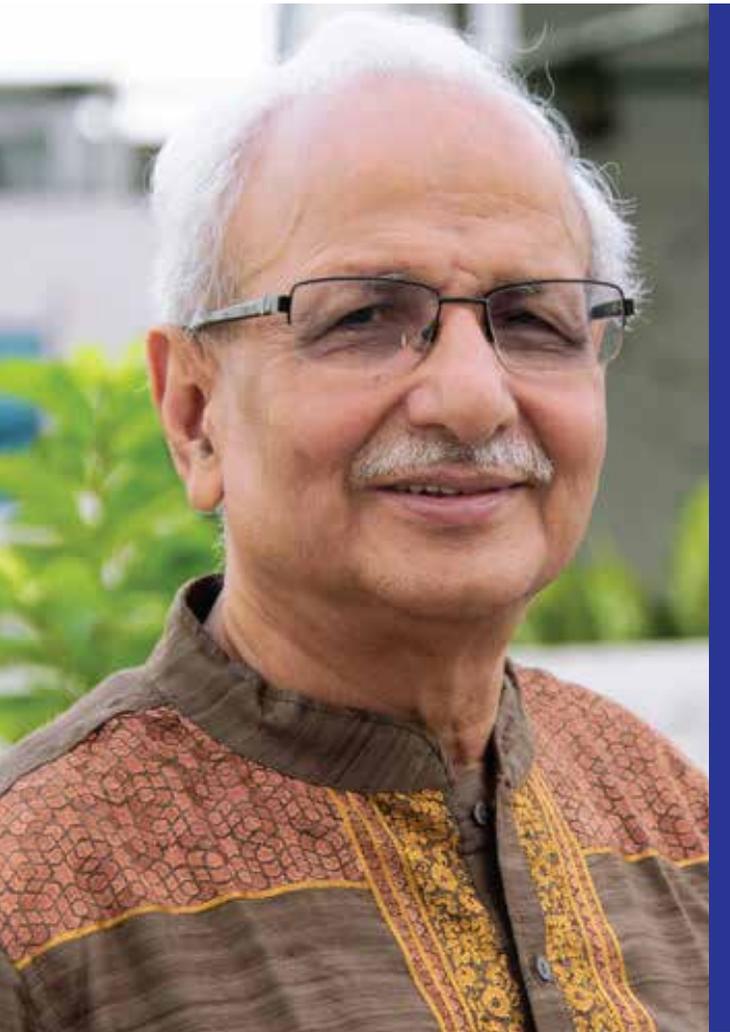
Three Decades of  
Leadership for the  
Development of  
Bangladesh

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# Message from The Country Director



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

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.

# Executive Summary

The Hunger Project-Bangladesh is the nation's largest volunteer-driven development organization. It was registered with the NGO Bureau, Registration No. 557, dated 11 November 1991. It has trained more than 250,000 volunteers across every district of the country. Its programs are supported by a highly committed staff based in 10 regional offices, with its national office in Dhaka and are funded by bilateral donors and private citizens worldwide.

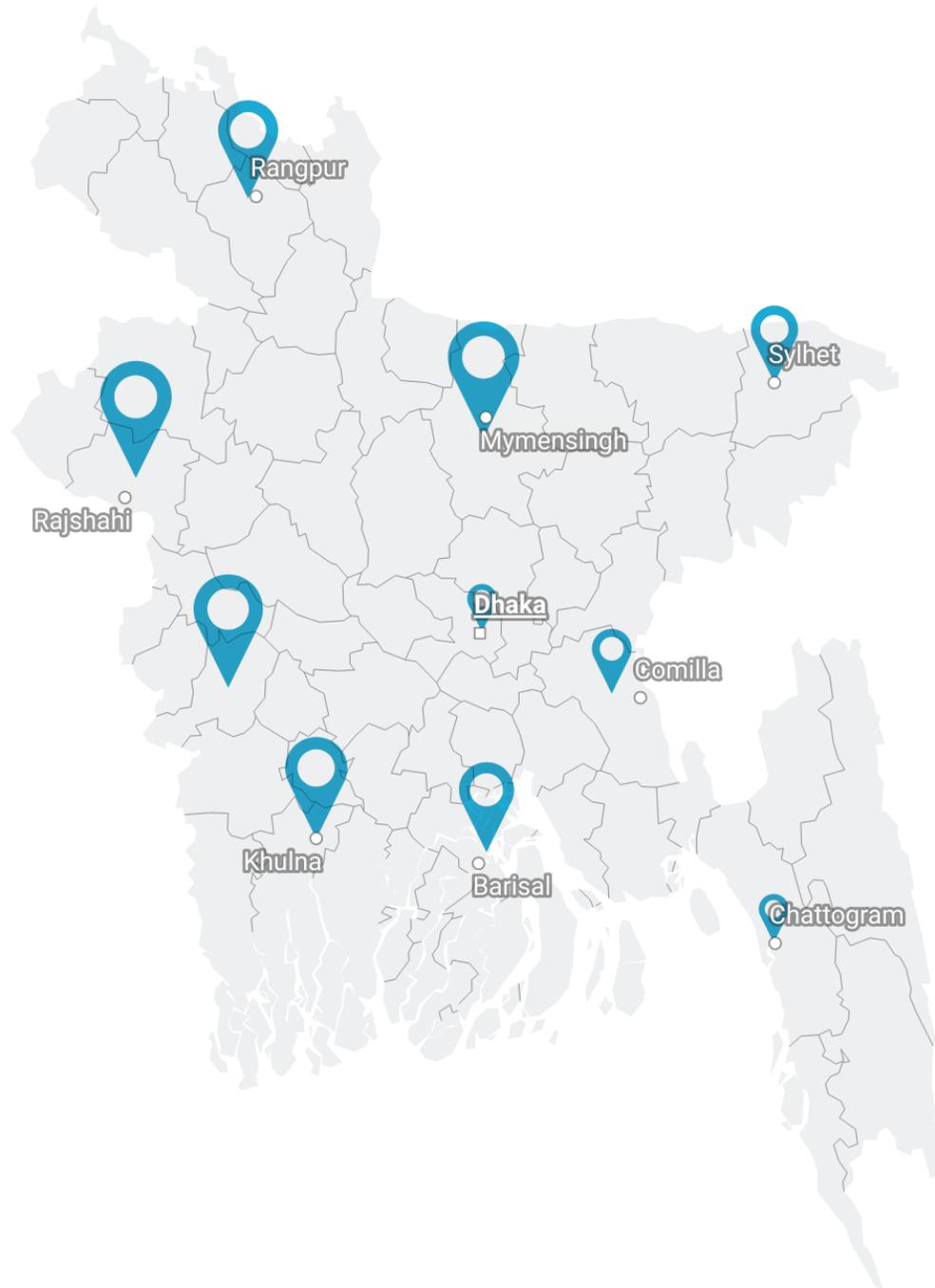
The Hunger Project-Bangladesh is an affiliate of the Global Hunger Project, headquartered in New York, a 501c3 organization incorporated in 1977 and in consultative status with the United Nations since 1985.

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.

During 2021, The Hunger Project-Bangladesh advances Bangladesh's commitment to achieve the 2030 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** through strategies in five thematic areas described in the remainder of this report:

1. **Covid-19 and Climate Change:** Facilitating community-led actions to achieve **Coronavirus Resilient Villages (CRV)** where volunteer action demonstrably reduced infection rates. The lessons we learn are being applied to climate change resilience.
2. **Poverty Reduction:** After years of decline, the disruptions of Covid-19 drove millions into poverty. THP mobilized strategies based on building self-reliance, rural livelihoods and community philanthropy in its SDG Unions program – including a special focus on livelihoods for the ultra-poor through self-help groups.
3. **Gender Equality:** Similarly, every crisis causes a uptick in gender-based violence including child marriage. THP makes empowering women and girls its top priority in all programs, including mobilizing national networks for girls rights and gender justice.
4. **Good Governance:** Community-led progress can only be made sustainable through good governance. THP works to improve governance through increased citizen participation, utilizing tools for social accountability, and through advocacy by a nation-wide network of citizens committed to non-partisan reforms.
5. **Youth Mobilization:** The Hunger Project's **Youth Ending Hunger (YEH)** network provides leadership training to youth leaders who carry out their own local initiatives for the SDGs in local YEH chapters that comprise 100,000 youth, both adolescent boys and girls and young women and men.

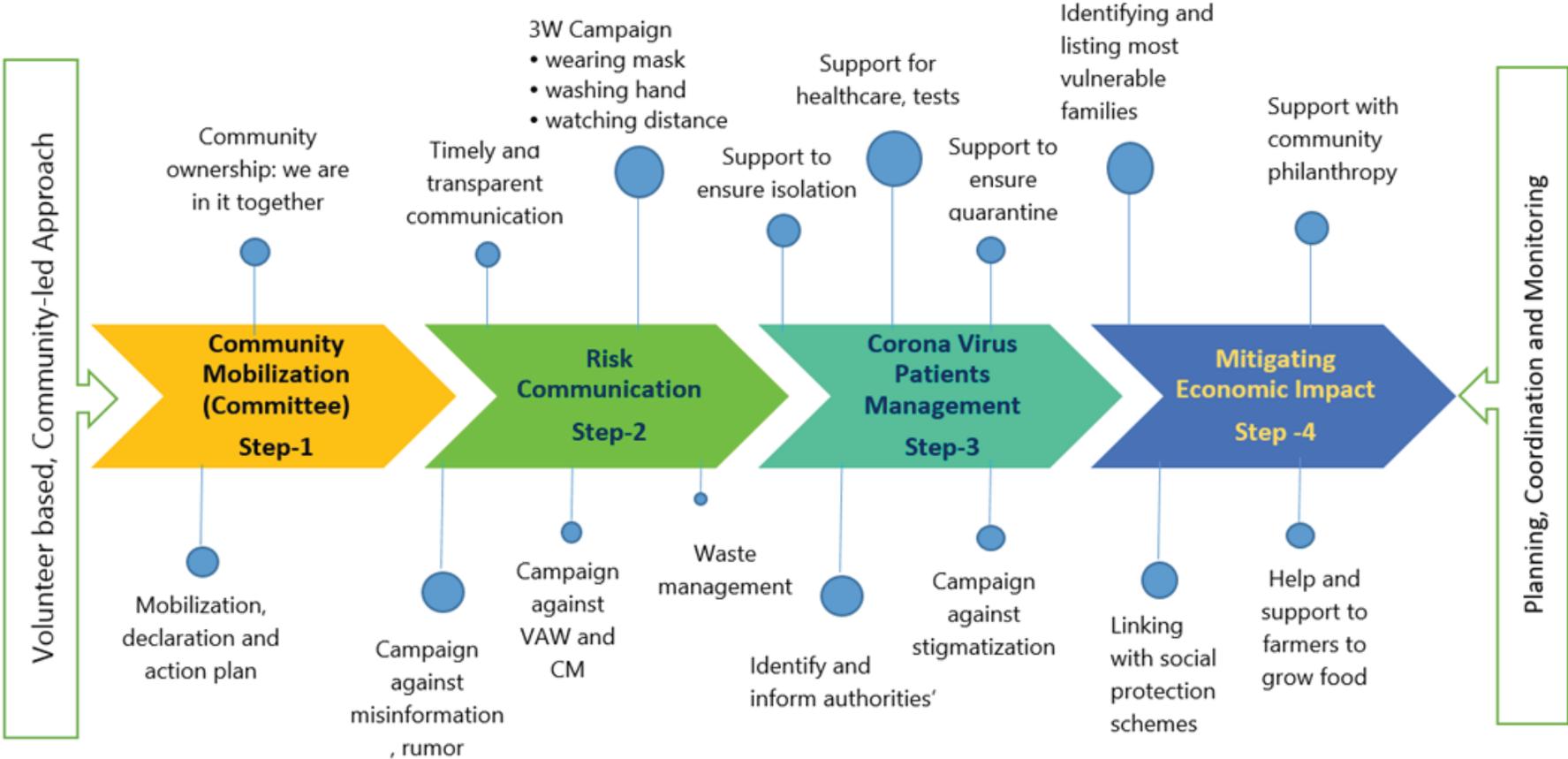
# Work areas of The Hunger Project, 2021



# 01 Covid-19 and Climate Change

During Covid, more than 2,000 villages 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.

## Corona Virus Resilient Villages (CRV) Approach



As shown in this diagram, the CRV model accompanies community members through four stages:

1. Community Mobilization, so that people come to see that only through ensuring that everyone is safe will anyone be safe, and unify to take collective action.
2. Risk Communication, so that everyone quickly comes to understand and embrace the Three W's identified by the World Health Organization and Bangladesh's Ministry of Health: to wear masks, wash hands and watch your (2 meter) distance. Coronavirus Resilient Villages built on their success in 2020, when they produced more than 180,000 masks and distributed 60,000 KGs of hand sanitizer, to promote continued vigilance and vaccination acceptance.
3. Patient Management: CRV volunteers campaigned against stigmatization of covid patients, promoting testing and ensuring proper quarantine.
4. Mitigating Economic Impact: CRV volunteers identified the most destitute and mobilized community philanthropy to relieve their distress. They linked families to social protection schemes and encouraged households to grow local nutritious food.

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.





# 02 Ending Hunger and Poverty

The Hunger Project recognizes that “zero hunger” depends on action in many areas simultaneously: rural livelihoods, gender discrimination and inadequate public services such as water and sanitation.

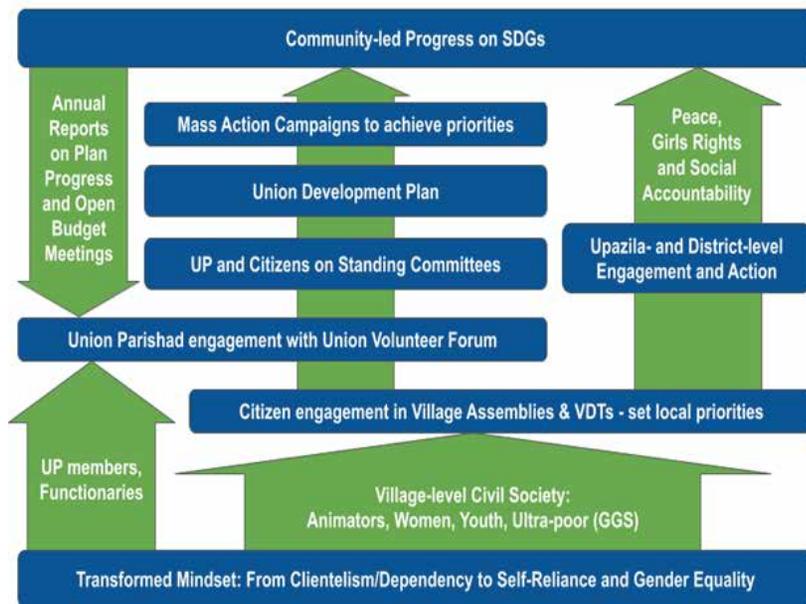
Mobilizing communities to solve these challenges simultaneously at the administrative level closest to the people – the Union Parishad – is at the heart of our **core program – the SDG Union Strategy**.

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 income-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.

An integral component in every SDG Union is PAR: Mobilizing the “Ultrapoor.” 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.

A special project in 14 of the SDG Unions of Dumuria Upazila of Khulna District is **Right2Grow** – a new, multi-country five-year project that started in 2021 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 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.

## 03 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



In response to the deeply entrenched gender discrimination, The Hunger Project created the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum (NGCAF), an alliance comprising 198 international and local civil society organizations. The Hunger Project serves as the lead organization and secretariat of the alliance.

The major achievements of NGCAF in 2021 are-

- Inclusion of NGCAF in the Central Women and Child Abuse Prevention Committee formed by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs.
- Inclusion of the Secretary of NGCAF as a distinguished member in the Committee on Child Rights formed by the National Human Rights Commission.
- Publication and circulation of the yearly report on Violence Against Girl Children. Data was collected by monitoring 14 local, 08 national and 02 online newspapers.
- Publication of statements in 03 newspapers demanding urgent action and provision to speed-up punishment to stop all types of violence against women and girls including torture, rape, sexual harassment, etc. during Covid-19 pandemic.
- Celebration of National Girl Child Day 2021 by organizing discussion meetings and cultural programs centrally with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, and Directorate of Women Affairs. Also, Various programs such as discussion meeting, essay competition, speech contest, etc. were organized at the grassroots in 59 Union Parishads of 17 Upazilas in 19 districts.
- Development of the draft law titled “Sexual Harassment Prevention and Remedy Law, 2019” and handing it over to the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights Committee.



# 04 Youth Engagement

Youth Engagement 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.



## 05 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



Halting violence is central to achieving SDG 16. The Hunger project implements PAVE: People Against Violence Everywhere. PAVE 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.



# 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.”

## 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—THP is the secretariat of this alliance
- 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.

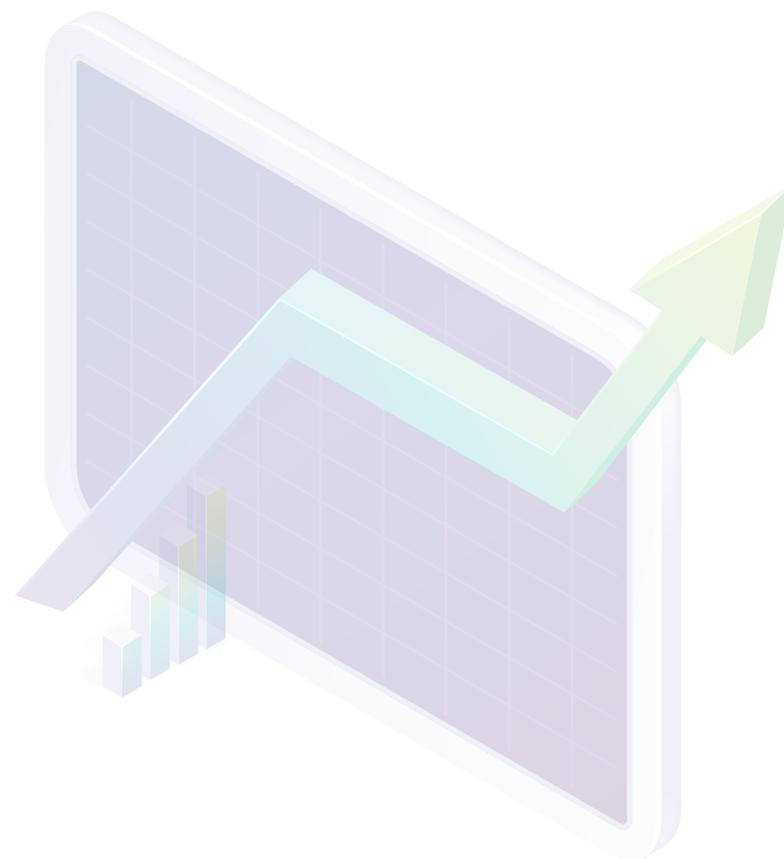


# Summary of the 2021 Audited Financial Report (Taka)

Total support and revenue	176,315,538
Total of program/support expenses	131,777,130
Change in net assets	44,538,408
Ending net assets	83,154,456

## Details of contributions

THP-Australia	5,218,964
THP-Sweden	8,581,970
THP-Netherlands	46,485,767
THP-New Zealand	1,687,647
The Global Hunger Project	11,092,146
Democracy International	20,751,296
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)	12,229,810
National Endowment for Democracy	8,214,675
FHI360	877,278
Pure Earth	149,560
German Ministry of Foreign Affairs	19,413,777
Local contributions	1,962,545
Total	157,829,809



# To learn more, visit <https://en.thpbd.org>

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