

Mission Information



Field	Education & Digital Equity
--------------	---------------------------------------

Member State:	United States of America
----------------------	--------------------------

Date of Submission:	03/05/2026
----------------------------	------------

I. Statement of Purpose

Our focus group examines the intersection of education policy, climate adaptation, and governance transparency in Bangladesh, a country that is very vulnerable to climate change, especially in coastal regions. Bangladesh faces intensifying climate hazards particularly cyclones, floods, and heatwaves, while undergoing significant political transition following the 2024 student-led uprising and the 2026 return of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to power.

These developments have introduced constitutional reforms, including new executive constraints and term limits, but they have also produced a period of institutional restructuring amid a fragile economic environment.

Within this context, Bangladesh presents a critical case for studying how governance systems translate international aid and climate adaptation investments into real social protection. Nearly 40 percent of Bangladesh's population are children, making education systems a central pillar of long-term resilience. Yet climate shocks increasingly disrupt schooling. In 2024 alone, extreme weather events—including heatwaves, cyclones, and flooding—disrupted schooling for over 30 million Bangladeshi students, with closures lasting weeks across multiple districts and worsening educational inequality (UNICEF; Save the Children).

II. Research Question / Inquiry

Sample question: Under what governance conditions do education-based and digitally enabled climate risk communication systems translate early warnings and shelter infrastructure into measurable reductions in cyclone mortality in coastal Bangladesh?

III. Executive Abstract

Summary of Findings:

Education disruptions are not simply academic setbacks; they represent broader governance challenges. When schools close for extended periods due to climate shocks, children in marginalized communities face higher dropout risks, increased economic pressures, and in some cases early marriage or labor participation. These disruptions deepen existing inequality cycles, particularly in coastal regions already vulnerable to displacement and poverty.

Few countries have faced climate exposure as severe as Bangladesh. During the late twentieth century, cyclones regularly produced catastrophic human losses. The 1970 Bhola cyclone killed more than 138,000 people, illustrating the devastating consequences of weak early-warning systems, insufficient infrastructure, and limited coordination between government

and international actors. In the decades since, Bangladesh has transformed its disaster response architecture. Investments in early-warning systems, cyclone shelters, community preparedness, and education programs have reduced cyclone mortality dramatically, despite the country experiencing storms of similar or greater intensity. Bangladesh developed the Aid Information Management System (AIMS) to consolidate information on foreign aid commitments, disbursements, and expenditures across bilateral and multilateral donors. At the same time, the country participates in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), a global standard that enables development partners and governments to publish and track standardized aid data. These platforms allow donors, civil society organizations, and policymakers to monitor where funds are allocated and how projects are implemented, improving coordination between national planning processes and international development partners.

In part due to these innovative programs, climate-related aid is increasingly flowing into Bangladesh from bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank, USAID, and the Asian Development Bank. These funds support disaster preparedness, resilience via education, and social protection programs. Research examining disaster response in Bangladesh after Cyclone Aila in 2009, though still devastating, found a lower threshold of 339 deaths compared to a staggering 138,000 deaths in a similar storm that also hit the low-lying delta along the Bay of Bengal in 1991. Still, ensuring that climate and development funds reach the communities most affected by climate shocks remains an ongoing challenge. On average, 99 percent of surveyed households reported losses associated with corrupt practices in relief and preparedness interventions, highlighting the risk that governance failures can undermine even well-funded adaptation programs (ScienceDirect, 2012). Broader research on climate governance similarly finds that corruption compounds climate vulnerability in developing countries by weakening infrastructure, distorting aid allocation, and eroding public trust in state institutions (UNODC 2024; ScienceDirect 2024).

Without transparency and institutional accountability, climate funding may fail to translate into effective protection for vulnerable populations. Bangladesh has made important progress in strengthening aid transparency through their AIMS program while participation in the IATI further standardizes aid data reporting, allowing donors, governments, and the public to

track how development funds are allocated and used. These transparency mechanisms aim to increase donor confidence and improve coordination with national development planning. International institutions, including the World Bank, have supported Bangladesh's governance reforms through programs designed to strengthen public sector accountability and financial stability. Bangladesh has built the architecture of transparency, but the challenge now lies in fully operationalizing it to ensure that climate adaptation funds translate into measurable improvements in education resilience and disaster preparedness.

IV. Proposed Recommendations

These mechanisms have several important implications for climate adaptation financing. Transparency reduces uncertainty for donors by providing clearer visibility into how resources are used since donor confidence increases when governments demonstrate credible reporting systems and institutional accountability. Bangladesh's transparency initiatives therefore help explain why the country continues to receive substantial international support for climate adaptation, resilience infrastructure, and social services programs. According to the World Bank, governance reforms focused on public financial management and transparency have been central to strengthening institutional resilience and sustaining economic growth in Bangladesh. While transparency reduces uncertainty, transparent systems enable more efficient coordination between different actors involved in disaster preparedness. Aid historically has been fragmented across a vast network of government and institutions. Platforms such as AIMS reduce these coordination gaps by providing a centralized data infrastructure that aligns foreign aid with national development strategies. This coordination is particularly important for sectors such as education, which often operate across multiple funding streams including climate adaptation programs, humanitarian relief initiatives, and long-term development investments.

Education has emerged as a critical component of Bangladesh's disaster resilience strategy. When communities understand cyclone risks and trust government warnings, evacuation systems are more effective and mortality declines. Schools play a central role in this process by integrating climate awareness, preparedness training, and community communication into local education systems. In recent years, digital education platforms have further expanded

these capabilities by allowing educational materials and safety information to reach communities even when physical infrastructure is disrupted by floods or storms. These innovations highlight how digital governance and education policy can complement transparency mechanisms. Online platforms allow governments and donors to disseminate educational resources, coordinate aid distribution, and communicate preparedness information across vulnerable regions. At the same time, transparency systems such as IATI ensure that the financial flows supporting these initiatives remain visible to the public and international partners so together, these tools strengthen both institutional accountability and social resilience.

The global stakes of improving disaster governance are significant as natural disasters already generate enormous economic losses worldwide. In the United States alone, disasters caused more than \$140 billion in average annual losses between 2015 and 2024, with 2024 disaster costs exceeding \$182 billion (National Centers for Environmental Information). Globally, disasters have produced roughly \$6.9 trillion in economic losses since 1980, and only about one-third of these losses are insured (NCEI). As climate change intensifies extreme weather events, governments will face increasing pressure to manage both the humanitarian and financial consequences of disasters.

Bangladesh's experience therefore offers valuable lessons beyond South Asia. The country demonstrates that institutional transparency, coordinated aid management, and education-based resilience strategies can dramatically reduce disaster risk even in highly vulnerable regions. These lessons are particularly relevant when examining disaster governance failures in wealthier jurisdictions. The aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017 illustrates the consequences of fragmented disaster governance and limited transparency in aid allocation. Despite the storm being more destructive than hurricanes affecting Texas and Florida in the same year, federal resources were deployed more slowly to Puerto Rico. A later analysis found that by April 2019 the island had received only \$11 billion, approximately 12 percent of the estimated \$91 billion required for recovery (ScienceDirect, 2024). Infrastructure failures persisted for months, with some regions experiencing prolonged electricity outages and limited access to essential services.

Puerto Rico's experience demonstrates that financial capacity alone does not guarantee effective disaster recovery. The United States possesses significant technological and financial resources, yet bureaucratic fragmentation, unclear funding channels, and limited transparency in aid distribution delayed recovery efforts. These challenges highlight the potential value of adopting governance mechanisms similar to those implemented in Bangladesh. If transparency platforms comparable to AIMS and IATI were integrated into disaster recovery programs in Puerto Rico, federal agencies, local governments, and civil society organizations could more easily track the flow of recovery funds. Public dashboards documenting project implementation, infrastructure investments, and aid disbursement could reduce bureaucratic delays and strengthen public trust in recovery programs. Additionally, integrating online education preparedness programs and digital communication platforms into disaster response planning could improve community resilience during future climate events.

The country demonstrates how transparent systems and coordinated aid management can fund essential education-related infrastructure and improve both disaster preparedness and economic stability. As climate change accelerates global disaster risks, these innovative systems may provide valuable guidance for regions that must strengthen their ability to manage increasingly severe climate shocks.

Work Cited

- “Addressing Corruption Risks to Safeguard the Response To ...” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*,
track.unodc.org/uploads/documents/corruption/Publications/2024/Addressing_Corruption_Risks_to_Safeguard_the_Response_the_Climate_Change_Discussion_Draft_II.pdf.
Accessed 5 Mar. 2026.
- “Aid Information Management System.” *Bangladesh AIMS*, aims.erd.gov.bd/. Accessed 4 Mar. 2026.
- Dejun Zhou, et al. “The Impact of Corruption on Climate Risk – an International Evidence - Sciencedirect.” *ScienceDirect*,
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211464524000976. Accessed 5 Mar. 2026.
- “Developing a Homegrown Aid Database: Lessons from Bangladesh.” *Publish What You Fund*,
6 Dec. 2016,
www.publishwhatyoufund.org/2015/06/developing-homegrown-aid-database-lessons-bangladesh/.
- “Impact of Cyclones on Coastal Communities: Insights from Cyclones Remal and AILA in Bangladesh.” *ResearchGate*,
www.researchgate.net/publication/381040933_Impact_of_Cyclones_on_Coastal_Communities_Insights_from_Cyclones_Remal_and_Aila_in_Bangladesh. Accessed 5 Mar. 2026.
- Johannes. “Climate Change and Child Education in Bangladesh: A Path to Resilience.” *International Society for Human Rights*, 2 Mar. 2026,
ishr.org/climate-change-and-child-education-in-bangladesh-a-path-to-resilience/.
- Mahmud, Tanvir, and Martin Prowse. “Corruption in Cyclone Preparedness and Relief Efforts in Coastal Bangladesh: Lessons for Climate Adaptation? - Sciencedirect.” *ScienceDirect*,
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0959378012000799. Accessed 5 Mar. 2026.
- “33 Million Children in Bangladesh Had Schooling Disrupted by Climate Crises in 2024-UNICEF in Bangladesh.” *United Nations*, United Nations,

bangladesh.un.org/en/288161-33-million-children-bangladesh-had-schooling-disrupted-climate-crises-2024%E2%80%94unicef. Accessed 4 Mar. 2026.

NCEI.Monitoring.Info@noaa.gov. “Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters.” *National Centers for Environmental Information*, www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/. Accessed 4 Mar. 2026.

Pacione, Michael. “Geography and Public Finance: Planning for Fiscal Equity in a Metropolitan Region - Sciencedirect.” *ScienceDirect*, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305900601000113. Accessed 5 Mar. 2026.

“Save the Children | Bangladesh: Extreme Heat Closes All Schools and Forces 33 Million Children out of Classrooms.” *Save the Children*, www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2024-press-releases/bangladesh-extreme-heat-closes-all-schools. Accessed 5 Mar. 2026.

“World Bank Helps Bangladesh Improve Transparency, Public Sector Accountability and Financial Sector Stability.” *World Bank*, World Bank Group, 20 June 2025, www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/06/20/world-bank-helps-bangladesh-improve-transparency-public-sector-accountability-and-financial-sector-stability.

WorldBank. *World Bank Data360*, data360.worldbank.org/en/economy/BGD. Accessed 4 Mar. 2026.