The value of our volunteers

A study focusing on the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) volunteers’ response to Cyclone Mahasen in the coastal belt of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

by

Md. Kamrul Hasan
Senior PMER Officer
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Khairul Anam Khan
Director (OPS)
Cyclone Preparedness Program

Adith Shah Durjoy
OD Manager
IFRC Bangladesh Delegation
How we work

www.ifrc.org
Saving lives, changing minds.

Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the IFRC to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises
2. Enable healthy and safe living
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

© International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Asia Pacific zone, Kuala Lumpur, 2014

Any part of this publication may be cited, copied, translated into other languages or adapted to meet local needs without prior permission from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, provided that the source is clearly stated. Requests for commercial reproduction should be directed to the IFRC at secretariat@ifrc.org

All photos used in this study are copyright of the IFRC unless otherwise indicated.

Cover photos:
Top right: Dissemination of cyclone warning to the community
Top left: VHF radio operation volunteer speaking in the radio as a part of the regular announcement
Bottom: FGD with a community for knowing social benefit
The value of our volunteers
A study focusing on the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) volunteers’ response
to Cyclone Mahasen in the coastal belt of Bangladesh | Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Table of contents

Executive summary 2
1. Introduction 3
   Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) 4
   Bangladesh Red Crescent Society 5
   Methodology of the Study 5
   CPP volunteer 7
   Study area and CPP activity 8
2. The economic value of our volunteers 10
   A. Total number of volunteer hours 10
   B. Full-time staff equivalent of the total number of volunteer hours 10
   C. Total volunteer investment 11
   D. Total volunteer value 12
   E. The VIVA ratio 13
   F. Per capita costs and contributions 14
3. The social value of volunteering 15
4. Other findings 18
5. Conclusion 19
6. Recommendations 19
Acknowledgment 20

List of tables
Table 1: List of warning and rescue equipment that the volunteer Units are generally provided with 9
Table 2: List of Personal Protective Gears usually provided to volunteers 9
Table 3: Beneficiary coverage in total CPP command area and in the area of selected 12 Units 9
Table 4: Total number of volunteer hours rendered by volunteers 10
Table 5: Total volunteer investment in 2013 for the 12 volunteer Units 11
Table 6: Total volunteer value 13
Executive summary

Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) is considered globally as a role model in utilizing community-based volunteers for disaster preparedness and management. Since the establishment of CPP in 1972, volunteers have played a vital role in preparing and protecting vulnerable people in their own community from any cyclonic disaster in the coastal belt of Bangladesh by relentlessly disseminating early warning messages and other preparedness activities. However, very limited studies have been done focusing on the contributions of CPP volunteers toward saving the lives and properties of vulnerable community.

This study intends to look into the economic as well as the social value of CPP volunteers with focus on their efforts to prepare the community to respond to cyclone Mahasen in May 2013 in coastal districts. After the cyclone Mahasen alert from Bangladesh Meteorological Department, CPP activated all its 49,365 volunteers to disseminate signals. However, only 180 volunteers from two worst-hit districts of Mahasen, Barguna and Patuakhali were considered on sample basis to conduct this study. The volunteers were involved in signal dissemination, evacuation and sheltering, search and rescue and first aid before, during and after Mahasen cyclone.

**At a glance!**
- 36,000 beneficiaries reached in 2013 (in selected areas)
- Total number of volunteer hours: 8,423
- Equivalent full time staff: 5
- Total volunteer value: CHF 14,148.94 / BDT 1,131,915
- Investment: CHF 335.36 / BDT 26,829
- VIVA ratio: 42:1

**Major recommendations of this study**
1. Basic skills training for volunteers on a regular basis
2. Modern and upgraded warning and rescue equipment, FA kits and personal protective gears for volunteers
3. Insurance coverage for all volunteers
4. Provision of ID cards for all volunteers
5. Volunteer database (RMS) with relevant information with a system of regular updating
6. Measures for encouraging young people to become volunteers.

For full list of recommendations, turn to page 19.
1. Introduction

This study, focusing on the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) volunteers, is the first time since its inception in 1973 as a joint venture programme of the Government of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS). In spite of being termed as global role model in utilizing community-based volunteers for disaster preparedness and management, no initiative was taken so far to recognize contribution of CPP volunteers’ through a formal study. However, BDRCS conducted the first VIVA study in 2014 on its Youth Volunteers’ response to the people affected by Rana Plaza building collapse in Savar, Dhaka. This study, a consequent measure of BDRCS’s first VIVA study, was inspired by the heroic role played by the community-based CPP volunteers who help people prepare for any cyclonic disaster in the coastal communities of Bangladesh. CPP is the only programme working specifically to protect life and property of the vulnerable coastal people from cyclone. Equipped with steadfast determination to reduce risks and loss of lives brought by cyclone, the CPP volunteers managed to significantly reduce cyclone casualties from 300,000 in 1970s to 3,800 in SIDR 2007 and to just 17 in Mahasen in 2013. The commitment of CPP volunteers to help others was an ultimate sacrifice that took the lives of 26 volunteers at the height of their mission. The tragedy was a lesson learnt for the BDRCS and the volunteers to put top priority the safety and security of their own ranks for their protection.

Objectives of the study:

- Determine the economic value of CPP volunteers’ response to cyclone Mahasen
- Identify social value and impact in the community level as well as among the volunteers themselves and their family.
- Document best practices and success stories which may be replicated in the future endeavors for the development of volunteerism
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for the BDRCS as well as for the government for more effective and efficient management of CPP volunteers.

Scope and limitations

Volunteers have been the driving force for implementing activities of CPP in emergency or in normal times since its inception. However, there was no such study undertaken so far to analyze the services the volunteers have been rendering in the disaster prone coastal areas of Bangladesh. Therefore, this is very important and timely initiative to scrutinize...
The value of our volunteers

A study focusing on the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) volunteers’ response to Cyclone Mahasen in the coastal belt of Bangladesh | Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Further values of the volunteers in their mission of saving lives of vulnerable people in the coastal community. This study will calculate the economic value of volunteering against the services rendered, and on limited range, the social value especially, in terms of beneficiary satisfaction and impact on the community as well as on the volunteers and their families.

The study did not calculate intangible values like the quality of services rendered and as well as the immense risks that volunteers take while performing their duties before, during, and after the cyclonic disasters.

The study was based on sample basis data collection (only 12 units of volunteers out of 3291 units in whole coastal belt were considered for the interview) which may not be possible to reflect the overall scenario of CPP volunteers’ activity in the whole command area. The study was also focused for a particular disaster scenario within a small geographical area. Besides, it was very difficult to get accurate data on annual investment for volunteers as there is no systematic and computerized financial recording system. Also, CPP has limited documentation and reporting system to record detailed data on volunteer deployment and determining estimated volunteering hours had to depend only on interviews with individual volunteers.

Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP)

The Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) is a unique institutional arrangement for community preparedness created to mitigate the challenges of catastrophic cyclones that frequently hit Bangladesh coast. The idea of CPP started in 1965 when the National Society (today’s Bangladesh Red Crescent Society) requested the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) formerly the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to support the establishment of “disaster warning system” for the population living in the coastal belt. In 1966, the International Federation and Swedish Red Cross began the implementation of a pilot scheme for cyclone preparedness which consisted of warning equipment and was operational in 299 unions in 30 upazila under 11 districts. In 1970, in response to the request of the United Nations General Assembly, a new strategy of Cyclone Preparedness Programme was developed in 1972. In 1973, CPP evolved as a joint venture programme of Government of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS). Today, CPP provides a robust early warning system for the coastal population in 3,291 villages, 322 unions and 37 sub districts of 13 districts. CPP is now considered a role model worldwide as an organization that has evolved in the true spirit of volunteerism.

The BDRCS CPP disseminates cyclone early warning messages through its extensive HF and VHF radio network (156 stations) to districts along the coastal belt. It has a strong volunteer base in the community level to deliver the messages to the people and also to get involved in rescue, first aid activities and relief distribution.
The CPP is run by a joint management mechanism through programme “Policy Committee” and programme “Implementation Board” comprising representatives from Bangladesh Government and BDRCS. BDRCS has the mandate of handling the operational part of the CPP which includes volunteer trainings, equipment, and distribution of manuals for operations.

The Standing Orders on Disaster of 2010, the National Plan for Disaster Management 2010–2015 and the National Disaster Management Act of 2012 are the major guiding documents for disaster management in Bangladesh which defined the roles of CPP volunteers and officials from local to national level.

**Bangladesh Red Crescent Society**

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society was established as a National Society on 31 March, 1973 by the President’s Order No. 26 of 1973 with the retrospective effect on 16 December 1971 role as an auxiliary to the public authority. It was recognized by the ICRC and IFRC in September and November 1973, respectively. Since inception, BDRCS has been working to prevent and alleviate human sufferings in line with the international humanitarian standards and following the Seven Fundamental Principles of the Movement. Having auxiliary status, BDRCS is rendering its humanitarian services across the country through its 68 branches, especially in times of natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies.

The official mandate of the BDRCS as stated in the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) is to complement the government’s efforts in case of emergency response, emphasizing the development of disaster preparedness related plans and programmes. The Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2009 also emphasize the role of BDRCS to enhance the cyclone preparedness programme.

**Methodology of the Study**

**Sampling design**

The VIVA study 2015 series has considered a different angle by including the provision of measuring the social value of volunteers alongside the economic value through a combination of methods and approaches for evaluating both values.

This study is inspired by the outstanding contributions and efforts of CPP volunteers in its response to cyclonic disasters with special focus on cyclone Mahasen in May 2013. Among the 10 coastal districts hit by cyclone Mahasen, the study focused on two worst-affected districts of Barguna and Patuakhali. Data collection was centered on one upazila of each district which was selected through random sampling. From each upazila, three unions were selected and from each union, two units of volunteers were interviewed. Thus, there were six units from each upazila, and as each volunteer
A unit consists of 15 members, there were 30 volunteers from each union implying 90 volunteers from each upazila or from each district. The below diagram shows the selection of volunteer units at a glance:

---

**Data collection**

Data collection methods and tools for this study were designed keeping two aspects in mind, i.e. calculation of economic value and measuring social value of volunteering.

**Economic value calculation**

For calculating economic value, Katherine Gaskin’s formula has been applied. In this connection, getting data related to investment for volunteers, desk/document review was carried out. Further, expenditures related to deployment of volunteers responding to cyclone Mahasen were also identified. This included cost incurred for training of volunteers, equipment and personal protective gears, insurance cost, recreation, etc. All data gathered were cross checked and validated for accuracy.

Using a semi-structured questionnaire, survey was conducted among volunteers of sample units to determine working hours and particular responsibility of individual volunteers during the cyclone Mahasen response. Key informant interview (KII) was also carried out with key staff of NHQ CPP and the respective volunteer units.

**Measuring social value**

The social value obtained from the voluntary services to the community by the CPP volunteers were captured through a satisfaction survey. Social value was also measured by the satisfaction of the volunteers and their families in serving their community. Qualitative data collection methods such as Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII) and Group Interview, were applied to find out community perception on the value of volunteer service in their community. To do this, one FGD with community and one with volunteers were conducted in each upazila. Selection of community was done in a random basis for conducting FGD. Besides, the local government representatives (chairman/member) from Upazila and Union level were interviewed as key informant along with the interview of CPP unit official. A pre-set checklist was followed for the field level FGD and KII. The authors
developed and finalized the checklist in consultation with CPP officials both in NHQ and field level. The whole data collection process was guided by the below diagram:

CPP volunteer

CPP is a unique example of community-based volunteering which has gained worldwide reputation on cyclone preparedness and early warning dissemination. This programme has been in full swing with the support of about 49,365 enthusiastic, dedicated and committed volunteers among which 16,455 are female and 32,910 are male. These volunteers, besides performing duties related to warning dissemination during the cyclone season, undertake awareness raising campaign through mock drill, stage drama etc., and contribute to long term mitigation activities such as tree planting throughout the year.
The process of becoming BDRCS CPP volunteer is strictly regulated by the following criteria; age between 18 and 30, strong commitment and attitude to serve people, permanent resident of the locality, ability to read and write and financially independent and self-supporting, etc. Moreover, a candidate has to go through a rigorous selection process and probation period before becoming a regular volunteer.

Although they do not receive any monetary incentives, the main benefits gained by CPP volunteers are respect from their peers and communities and the satisfaction that comes from saving disaster-stricken vulnerable people.

### Structure of CPP volunteer

The lowest committee of CPP volunteers is referred as ‘Unit’ which consists of 15 volunteers (10 male and 5 female). Each volunteer unit generally covers 2.5 square km and about 2000-2500 population. All members of each volunteer unit are divided into 5 subgroups like warning/signal dissemination, evacuation, first aid, search and rescue and food. There is a union committee comprising all units (10-12) under the union and also an upazila (sub-district) committee comprising all unions. Thus, there are 3291 units in 322 unions, 37 upazilas and 13 districts of coastal Bangladesh.

### Study area and CPP activity

Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district and Amtali upazila under Barguna district are two of the cyclone prone areas where CPP has a very strong network of community-based volunteers for early warning dissemination and cyclone preparedness. CPP has as many as 140 and 158 volunteer units in Kalapara and Amtali, respectively, which bring the entire population of those areas under dissemination of any disaster warning. There are 126 cyclone shelters in Kalapara and 96 shelters in Amtali upazila for evacuating vulnerable people by the CPP volunteers in time of emergency. During Mahasen, approximately 75,000 people were evacuated in Kalapara and 55,000 were evacuated in Amtali by the CPP volunteers.

The upazila office of CPP in Kalapara and Amtali consists of junior assistant director (JAD) who is supported by one office assistant cum radio operator. Besides, there is one night guard in both offices to ensure security. There are 1 HF and 5 VHF radio in Amtali and 1 HF and 8 VHF radio in Kalapara CPP offices. In the face of cyclone Mahasen, both the upazila CPP took all preparedness measures including arranging
coordination meeting, preparing cyclone shelters, and hoisting signal flags in all identified places.

**Table 1: List of warning and rescue equipment that the volunteer units are generally provided with**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warning &amp; rescue equipment</th>
<th>Number per unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hand Siren</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megaphone/ Super Megaphone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal Flag</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torch/Search Light</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag Mast</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA Kits</td>
<td>3 Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search and Rescue Kit</td>
<td>3 Sets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: List of personal protective gears usually provided to volunteers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal protective gears</th>
<th>Number per unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Jacket</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain coat</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gum boot</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Hat/Helmet</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC Vest</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On 16 May 2013, tropical cyclone Mahasen affected the lives of 1.5 million people in ten West Central coastal districts of Bangladesh leaving 17 dead. Of the ten coastal districts hit, the three districts of Patuakhali, Bholo and Barguna were the worst affected. Heavy rains caused by the cyclone coupled with gales flattened huge tracts of standing crops and washed away numerous fish ponds and fish culture. It also caused extensive damage to embankments in the coastal districts. Thousands of people were injured and many livestocks killed. As per the government information, a total of 49,178 houses were completely destroyed and 45,825 houses were partially damaged. In the face of the cyclone, CPP mobilized all its 3291 units comprising 49,365 volunteers across the coast line of Bangladesh who disseminated cyclone alert to the community to prepare them for safe evacuation and advised fishermen not to sail to the deep sea. The volunteers evacuated an approximate number of 1.1 million vulnerable people to the cyclone shelters.

**Table 3: Beneficiary coverage in total CPP command area and in the area of selected 12 units**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiary coverage</th>
<th>Signal dissemination</th>
<th>Sheltering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall CPP Command area</td>
<td>Approx. 9 million</td>
<td>Approx. 1.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchment area of 12 Units (the study focus)</td>
<td>Approx. 36 thousand</td>
<td>Approx. 10 thousand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The economic value of our volunteers

A. Total number of volunteer hours

Table 4. Total number of volunteer hours rendered by volunteers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of Volunteers</th>
<th>180</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Hours Rendered</td>
<td>8,423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in the table, 180 volunteers rendered volunteering services for the vulnerable people in their own community in the selected area in the face of the cyclone Mahasen.

B. Full-time staff equivalent of the total number of volunteer hours

In order to carry out the work of the 180 volunteers, the branch would need the equivalent of 168 full time personnel. This was computed as follows:

\[
\text{Equivalent full time staff} = \frac{\text{Total volunteer hours}}{40 \text{ hours per week}} \times \frac{1}{48 \text{ weeks per year}}
\]

\[
= \frac{(8,423 \text{ hours} / 40)}{48}
\]

\[
= 5 \text{ full time staff}
\]

CPP volunteers are the leaders in the grassroots level. They risk their own life during cyclone signal to save people’s lives when others are busy only with their own safety. This is a service which other people cannot do. Besides, they are more disciplined and respectful to law and order of the society. They possess an intention to help people all the time by applying their knowledge and skills gained from their involvement with CPP. Community trust and rely on them in times of disasters. The interest we have witnessed among the people in the community during the recruitment of new volunteers indicates their impact in the society.

K.M. Tariqul Islam, Director (Admin), CPP

---

“Had I not been in touch with CPP, the spirit in my heart of helping people and serving humanity might have not been discovered.”

– Jakir Hossen Chunnu, Deputy Team Leader, Amtoli Upazila
C. Total volunteer investment

The total volunteer investment shows all the expenses associated with having volunteers in the selected Units in the year of volunteer deployment.

Table 5. Total volunteer investment in 2013 for the 12 volunteer units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Expenditure</th>
<th>Cost Detail</th>
<th>Amount (BDT)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Dry cell Battery for volunteers equipment @ BDT 608 per Unit</td>
<td>7,296.00</td>
<td>27.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HF/VHF Battery for Office @ BDT 304 per Unit per year</td>
<td>3,646.00</td>
<td>13.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wireless repair and maintenance cost @ BDT 152 per Unit</td>
<td>1,823.00</td>
<td>6.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting of Upazila/Union Volunteer Leaders @ BDT 81 per Unit</td>
<td>972.00</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td>VHF Operators (volunteer) remuneration@ BDT 1,091 per Unit</td>
<td>13,092.00</td>
<td>48.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>26,829.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The investment has been calculated considering the expenditure for 12 volunteer units (which were sampled for this study) in proportion with the overall annual expenditure for the whole 3,291 units throughout the CPP’s command area, and also the cost applicable for those units.

There is in fact no significant investment for development and capacity enhancement of the CPP volunteers especially in the selected units. The major expenses incurred by the CPP for those sample units included maintenance and batteries for equipment and radios, remuneration of HF/VHF operators (volunteers) etc. It is to be noted that the equipment (protective gears and warning equipment) provided to the volunteers are about 20-25 years old and the training provided to them last time before Mahasen was 15 years back.

The dry cell battery for mega phone, torch and radio for volunteers are provided twice in every year in face of every cyclone season (April-May and October-November) which is currently the regular and life line support from BDRCS to CPP. There was an approx. annual expenditure amounting BDT 2,000,000 for providing dry cell battery to all 3,291 volunteer units (at an amount of BDT 608 per Unit). Besides, annual average expenditure for HF/VHF Battery purchase, operators’ remuneration, wireless repairing and maintenance amounts to a total of about BDT 4 million for whole CPP command area.

However, there are some initiatives taken for strengthening CPP volunteers with the support of different donors. These initiatives covered personal gears to 360 units (5,400 vols) and CPP basic training for 180 units (2,700 vols) with the support from BDRCS and IFRC.
D. Total volunteer value

This study analyses the functions carried out by volunteers and time spent on each activity, and matches it to the equivalent paid work at the market wage. This produces an estimated amount – what the National Society would need to pay if it were hiring staff to carry out the same work. The table below presents the equivalent positions or paid work a volunteer does during the course of their duties:

However, apart from the 12 sample Units, CPP spent altogether the following amount in 2013 for training equipment and awareness raising campaign.

“
I enjoy providing voluntary service for the vulnerable people especially during any cyclone and flood. I consider informing people about upcoming disaster and helping children, pregnant, elderly people to go to safe shelter is something very significant in context of this area. My family fully supports my work. Even my husband joins me to help people whenever there is cyclone signal despite being not a CPP volunteer.”

– Mst. Khadija, CPP volunteer

CPP Radio Communication Equipment

Interview with Upazila and Union Team Leader for VIVA data collection.

Questionnaire survey with volunteers for determining volunteering hours.
The above positions of equivalent paid job are from current staff structure of CPP. The roles, responsibility and nature of work that the CPP volunteers do were considered while choosing these positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equivalent paid job</th>
<th>Volunteer roles (and total time rendered volunteering for these roles)</th>
<th>Equivalent staff</th>
<th>Estimate salary per hour</th>
<th>Number of hours</th>
<th>Total volunteer value (2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Assistant cum Radio Operator</td>
<td>Warning/ signal dissemination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>146.68</td>
<td>1482</td>
<td>217,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Assistant cum Radio Operator</td>
<td>Sheltering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>146.68</td>
<td>1266</td>
<td>185,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramedic</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>206.25</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>197,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant cum Radio Operator</td>
<td>Search and Rescue</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>139.93</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>81,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant cum Radio Operator</td>
<td>Food/relief distribution</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>139.93</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>47,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Assistant</td>
<td>Others (removing debris, broken trees, repairing houses, roads etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>139.93</td>
<td>2880</td>
<td>402,998.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>8,423</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,131,915</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. The VIVA ratio

The VIVA ratio is computed using the formula:

\[
\text{VIVA ratio} = \frac{\text{Total volunteer value}}{\text{Total volunteer investment}}
\]

Using the values obtained during the VIVA exercise, we can reach the following calculation:

\[
\text{VIVA ratio} = \frac{1,131,915}{26,829} = 42:1
\]

The VIVA ratio calculation means that for every one Taka spent on each volunteer, the CPP receives Tk 42 worth of value from services rendered by them.

During the SIDR Alert in 2007 I kept announcing repeatedly, going door to door, in the market places, on the roads, and boat terminals. But people didn’t believe and instead reproached me as after 1991, no major cyclone hit our coast. That was the hardest time in my entire volunteering life. But I didn’t give up as I sensed something bad was going to happen and I kept going to people again and again.

- Joy Dev Dutta, CPP Volunteer (Nationally recognized for his service during SIDR in 2007.)
F. Per capita costs and contributions

The per capita contribution will refer to the "volunteers mobilized in 2013". Calculations on the hours, value and expenditure for each CPP volunteer during the response to cyclone Mahasen

Per capita hours = \[
\frac{\text{Total number of volunteer hours}}{\text{Total number of volunteers}}
\]
\[
= \frac{8,423}{180}
\]
\[
= 46.79 \text{ hours per volunteer}
\]

Per capita expenditure = \[
\frac{\text{Total volunteer investment}}{\text{Total number of volunteers}}
\]
\[
= \frac{26,829}{180}
\]
\[
= \text{BDT 149.05}
\]

Per capita value = \[
\frac{\text{Total volunteer value}}{\text{Total number of volunteers}}
\]
\[
= \frac{1,131,915}{180}
\]
\[
= \text{BDT 6,288}
\]

I and my husband love helping people and CPP is the best platform to do that. CPP added lots of value in our life. We have learned a lot of things at the same time and got the opportunity to serve people. This engagement changes our life pattern, our thinking and values. Family members, neighbors, community people respect us. My colleagues at my school rely on me in disaster related issues. I teach my students about first aid and things to do during disasters. I encourage my students to become volunteer. I and my husband would like to see our children become CPP volunteer in the future.

Rina Alam and her Husband Alamgir Hossain
3. The social value of volunteering

Measuring social value of volunteering, especially community-based volunteering, requires in depth study or evaluation which is not possible under the frame of Volunteer Investment and Value Audit Study. However, addressing social value in a limited scope has added an extra value to this study as there are other several values gained by volunteers which cannot be directly converted to economic value.

The study found a wide range of social impact of the CPP volunteerism starting from benefitting the society as well as the volunteers themselves and their family. It is not possible to calculate the value of the passion and determination the volunteers demonstrated and the high risk they took in disseminating the signals, evacuating vulnerable people from the remotest part to the cyclone shelter and participating in the immediate search and rescue operation after the disaster. Likewise, it is also not possible to calculate the value of peoples’ lives that have been saved by timely dissemination of warning and evacuation to cyclone shelter. During Mahasen, CPP volunteers evacuated approximately 1,100,000 vulnerable people to cyclone shelters which are definitely the reason for very low casualties.

Some of the major impacts and benefits of CPP volunteering in the community level are given below:

- Preparedness of household goods and assets to protect from cyclone and be ready to rush to cyclone shelter is completely dependent on CPP volunteers’ announcement
- Significant reduction in number of casualties due to cyclonic disaster (350,000 in 1970 cyclone, 138,650 in 1991 cyclone, 3,800 in SIDR 2007, 200 in AILA 2009 and 17 in Mahasen 2013) which has been possible due to the sincere and relentless efforts of CPP volunteers
- CPP, with one third female volunteers, has been contributing to a great extent toward women empowerment from the grassroots level. The volunteerism brings changes to women life in many ways. For example:
  - Enhancement of life saving skills in the area of first aid, search and rescue, disaster preparedness etc. “Earlier, we didn’t know anything about family preparedness in the face of any cyclone. But CPP teaches us what to do to save valuables during disaster which we can apply to our family and to the neighbors as well” …as said by one volunteer.
  - Enhancement of mobility through attending different events, trainings, meetings etc. related to various CPP activities.
  - Enhanced decision making and leadership qualities. Female volunteers enjoy the importance and respect given by their husbands and family members and
even by the community people. They also play important role while taking decision about children, livelihood or properties.

- Apart from cyclone preparedness, CPP volunteers take lead in different social movement and welfare activities for betterment of community including raising funds for helping poorest, distribution of winter clothes, support to poor students etc. with the help of local administration (as they have the access)
- The volunteerism contributes in reducing and protecting different social stigma like violence, drug addiction, etc. as the volunteers can be busy with something important and meaningful.

Similarly, volunteerism benefits volunteers and their family in many ways. During the group interview and individual discussion with volunteers the following issues came up as the major benefits for volunteers and their family.

- Respect and trust from the community members are the biggest benefit for volunteers
- While discussing with the volunteers, everyone acknowledged that CPP volunteerism helped them strengthen their personal skills and knowledge on leadership, communication and service delivery. They can apply the acquired knowledge in their family, friends and neighbors in times of need.
- Most of the CPP volunteers render the voluntary service related to their own profession making them appreciate more what they are doing.
- The volunteers are familiar with all levels of people in their community enabling them to participate in the local government (upazila or union Parishad) election and get elected as chairman or member of local government. “Their service as local government representative is also praiseworthy” – as a Unit team leader mentioned.
- Young volunteers think this experience of volunteering at grassroots level will help them in the future to get a better livelihood option (FGD).
What community say:

Being an elected representative of local government, I consider the presence of CPP volunteers very important. I can see that CPP volunteers cover the remotest place which is beyond the reach of any other organization, even the government, for signal dissemination and evacuation. However, the volunteers need regular capacity development training and they should be equipped with appropriate gears as they take very high risk to evacuate people. I am trying to allocate some money from the upazila Parishad fund to make a signal post and make arrangement for water sanitation and lighting system in cyclone shelter.

Abdul Motaleb Talukder, Chairman, Kalapara, Upazila Parishad

There is no CPP volunteer in our village and thus we are always late in getting any signal and other awareness related messages disseminated by CPP. The village is situated just on the verge of the confluence of the river Paira and the Bay of Bengal. That’s why we have been demanding to have a CPP volunteer in our locality.

Uten Talukder, Sadar Barguna

My Brother is a CPP volunteer. I feel like it is a very good advantage to have someone like him in the family. The whole family is confident about disaster related issues because of him. The neighboring people also rely on him and consider him as a leader in not only disaster related issue but also in different family or social events.

Community member, Kalapara, Patuakhali

We used to go to sea to catch fish during signal period as lots of fish can be caught then. So, many fishermen sail their boat with the hope to catch more fish during the signal. But they don’t come back anymore. Even I, went sometimes. But now I realize how risky it was as I heard many of my fellow fishermen could never come back again. Even during SIDR in 2007, a number of fishing boat sailed ignoring CPP’s announcement and many of them never came back. It is CPP who came to us repeatedly to remind us not to sail during any signal. They are very sincere and active in disseminating signals. If they were not there we could not get the signals and prepare ourselves.

Belal Hossain, Barguna

My daughter was killed by SIDR. CPP announced repeatedly and asked us to go to cyclone shelter but we didn’t as we assumed that it will not hit us. We have learnt a big lesson from SIDR at the cost of my daughter’s life. Now we never ignore what CPP announces. We get prepared and take a shelter in a safe place whenever they disseminate any signal. I don’t want anyone of my family to be washed away in cyclone.

Rahima, Barguna

I would like to have a CPP volunteer in my family. so we can have the signal message very fast and get more time to prepare. Moreover, we’ll be able to inform our neighbor and relatives about it.

FGD Patuakhali
4. Other findings

- There is a gap in coordination and understanding of roles and responsibilities in regard to CPP between Bangladesh Government and BDRCS.
- There is a common understanding among the relevant Government Officials that BDRCS could do more to flourish CPP operations. On the other hand, BDRCS thinks that it has been providing lifeline support (repair, replace of radio network, dry cell battery, battery for radio stations, training, equipment and gears and honorarium of VHF operators) for CPP operations since its inception.
- There is also a gap in the field level between CPP volunteers and BDRCS District Branches as CPP volunteers are not being considered and engaged in implementation of different Red Crescent project activities in the working area of the CPP volunteers.
- The volunteers spent approximately an amount of BDT 92,917 from their own pocket to buy food for people in the cyclone shelter, transporting people to shelters, buy candles etc. and BDT 62,150 for transportation of volunteers themselves during the dissemination of signals. CPP never reimbursed the money to the volunteers.
- The Volunteers have been contributing to a great extent toward building the image of the CPP and Red Crescent. Witnessing the sincere response during Cyclone SIDR and Mahasen by CPP volunteers, many people from the community expressed their interest to become a volunteer.
- The volunteers and even the field officials of the CPP are not professional in filling and archiving data/information related to volunteer deployment. Thus getting actual and accurate data on volunteering hours was based on individual memory. As a result, numbers of activities that the volunteers did round the year couldn’t be calculated.
- Use of technology and digitized system in CPP for its volunteer management, record keeping, documentation and warning dissemination is not up to the mark.
- There is no place (office) at the Union level where volunteer can meet periodically.
- The equipment and personal gears that the volunteers use is very old model and poor in condition. Most of the warning equipment like Hand Siren, Mega Phone, Super Megaphone, Radio are more than 15 years old and most of them are out of order.
- Most of the new recruited volunteers are working without any formal training on Early Warning, Search and Rescue, First Aid or other relevant issues. Those who have received are also before more than 15 years and meanwhile many of them have forgotten the learning. In fact, during 1997-2008, there were very few initiatives taken related to capacity building of the volunteers (training and equipment) due to lack of funding and donor support.
• To harmonize with demand at the local level, CPP is planning to expand its command area by creating more Volunteer Units to cover more number of coastal people.

• About 70% of volunteers are between 30-50 years. This indicates a crisis in the near future as young people are not becoming volunteers in a significant number who can take over the responsibility of those senior volunteers.

• Reporting and documentation system in CPP is not up to the mark and it seldom undertakes research and studies about volunteerism and its impact at the community level.

5. Conclusion

The VIVA study is the first study of its kind focusing on CPP volunteers’ work in saving lives of vulnerable coastal people. The study reveals that 5 full time staff would have been required to respond to cyclone Mahasen in the catchment area of 12 selected units. Each volunteer spent an average 47 hours during the Mahasen response period (8-9 days). The per capita value is BDT 6,288 while the per capita investment of CPP for having volunteers is BDT 149. However, the study was not confined only within the calculation of quantitative economic value but also tried to look into the quality and effectiveness of the services to measure the beneficiary satisfaction and social impact of CPP volunteerism. CPP may continue doing the Value of Volunteer Study to determine economic value and as well as social value of the services of its volunteers, at the same time, to identify gaps and deficits in the development of volunteerism and management of volunteers, and finally, to recognize and highlight the value of volunteers.

6. Recommendations

I. There should be adequate training for the volunteers and a regular refresher course on RCRC Movement, leadership, Disaster Management, First Aid, Search and Rescue, earthquake response, IGA, dead body management etc.

II. Advance training should be organized on First Aid, Search & Rescue and Earthquake for some selected volunteers of the Unit.

III. All Unit of Volunteers should have up to date warning and rescue equipment, personal protective gears and means of transport (locally available) for evacuating physically challenged people during emergency.

IV. Volunteers should be brought under coverage of Insurance (either individual or group insurance as appropriate).

V. BDRCS RMS volunteer module (database) should be maintained with relevant information of CPP volunteers which should be updated on a regular basis.
VI. Organize mock drill/simulation and awareness raising campaign in every vulnerable area before every cyclone season.

VII. Every volunteer should be provided with Identity card.

VIII. CPP may advocate with local government for allotment of room at Union Council Office Complex for volunteers meeting/training.

IX. More active measures should be taken for encouraging young people to become volunteers to address dropout of aged volunteers and rotation of leadership.

X. Harmonizing the pattern of relationship between CPP and local Red Crescent Units.

Acknowledgement

The study team and the Cyclone Preparedness Programme would like to acknowledge the contribution and support of the following in making this study possible:

- The volunteers who participated in the response operation of cyclone Mahasen of CPP.
- The community members and individual interviewees who participated in FGD and individual interview.
- Upazila (Kalapara and Amtali) and union team leaders and CPP officials for their sincere support to the field level data collection.
- Finance and accounts officials of CPP NHQ for providing volunteer investment related data.
- Chairman of Kalapara Upazila Parishad and Nishanbaria Union Parishad for participating in KII.
- PMER team of BDRCS for technical advice and guidance.
- Youth and Volunteer department of BDRCS for mobilizing fund for conducting this study.
- P&D department for overall coordination and Finance department for support to fund disbursement.
- IFRC BD Delegation and Asia Pacific Zone office for technical and financial support.
- BDRCS governance and management for approval and allocation of funds.

And finally, Shahinur Rahman JAD of P&D department for overall reviews and cross matching of different data and information.

About the authors

Md. Kamrul Hasan has been working in the humanitarian and development field for last 7 years with special focus on planning, management, monitoring & evaluation and reporting. Providing strategic management and technical services for Result Based Program implementation, conducting studies, review and evaluations on different interventions are the areas of his strength and interest. At present he is working as Senior PMER Officer of Planning and Development Department of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

Khairul Anam Khan has been serving to the BDRCS since 06 November, 1987. He worked different project/programme in the field and Unit (Branch) level offices for about 20 years. He also worked in the P&D (OD) Department at NHQ for about 9 years. He has skills on legal base reform, HR reformation, Strategic and development planning, Branch capacity building etc. He is a recognized Global OCAC facilitator by the IFRC. Currently he is the Director (Operation) of Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP).

Md. Adith Shah Durjoy started working with the IFRC-BD Delegation in 2007. Since then he’s been serving in different capacities under DM, OD, Coordination, Management and also supporting the RDRT System. He has good experience to work in the country and abroad in designing and implementing disaster response and recovery programs. He is a Global team member FERST, Shelter Cluster Information management Team, CTP ToT roster, South Asia RDRT ToT roster etc. He is now working as OD Manager of IFRC-BD Delegation.
The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.
For further information, please contact:

**Bangladesh Red Crescent Society**

684-686 Bara Maghbazar  
Dhaka 1217, Bangladesh  
Tel: (880) (2) 8319366 / 9330188 / 9330189 / 9350399 / 8314701 / 9352226  
Fax: (880) (2) 8311908 / 9352303  
Telex: 632232 BDRC BJ  
Telegram: RED CRESCENT DHAKA  
Website: www.bdrcs.org

**International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies**  
**Asia Pacific Zone**

OD Volunteering and Youth Unit  
The Ampwalk, Suite 10.02 (North Block)  
218 Jalan Ampang  
50450 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies**

PO BOX 372  
CH-1211 Geneva 19  
SWITZERLAND