

CYCLONE REMAL LESSONS

Learning Report with Action Plan



Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
Disaster Response Department

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Executive Summary

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) conducted a comprehensive Lessons Learned Workshop to evaluate its response to Cyclone Remal, which affected significant parts of Bangladesh in 2024. The response operation mobilized over 800 volunteers and staff, including 62 National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) members, to provide essential services to affected communities. The operation successfully reached approximately 140,000 people with various forms of assistance, including multipurpose cash grants to 27,699 households totaling 16.79 crore BDT (CHF 1.24 million), food parcels to 83,000 people, safe drinking water, emergency shelter materials, medical assistance, and psychosocial support.

The workshop employed a structured methodology comprising self-assessments using KOBO questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and integration of Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data to identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Notable achievements included effective early warning dissemination in collaboration with the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), prompt evacuation efforts, and extensive relief distribution despite difficult circumstances. Beneficiary feedback was largely positive, with over 97% reporting satisfaction with the assistance received and 99% confirming well-organized distribution processes.

Despite these successes, the operation faced significant challenges, including leadership gaps due to political unrest and government changes since July 2024, delayed needs assessments, and logistical constraints affecting timely distribution of assistance. The series of frequent disasters starting from April 2024, including heatwaves, floods, and civil unrest, further complicated response efforts. Volunteer welfare emerged as a critical concern, with insufficient travel allowances, delayed reimbursements, and inadequate protective equipment highlighted as areas requiring immediate attention.

The workshop resulted in actionable recommendations focused on streamlining procurement processes, enhancing volunteer support systems, improving coordination mechanisms, and strengthening community engagement practices. The findings from this workshop will inform BDRCS's approach to future disaster response and preparedness strategies, with particular emphasis on addressing the identified operational gaps and building upon successful practices. This comprehensive evaluation underscores BDRCS's commitment to continuous improvement and enhanced service delivery to vulnerable communities affected by disasters.

Introduction

Bangladesh has long been vulnerable to cyclones and their devastating impacts, with Cyclone Remal being the latest in a series of frequent disasters that struck the country in 2024. The cyclone caused significant damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and communities across multiple districts, necessitating a swift and comprehensive humanitarian response. BDRCS, as a primary responder to disasters in the country, activated its contingency plan and mounted a substantial operation to address the immediate and medium-term needs of affected populations. This response occurred against a backdrop of complex challenges, including political unrest, government changes, and the cumulative effects of multiple disasters that had already stretched the organization's resources and capacities.

The Lessons Learned Workshop for Cyclone Remal Operation was conducted with the explicit purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of BDRCS's response efforts, identifying successful practices that could be replicated, and recognizing challenges that need to be addressed in future operations. This structured reflection process was designed to foster institutional learning and enhance the organization's disaster preparedness and response capabilities. The workshop brought together key stakeholders from various levels of the organization, including management, field staff, volunteers, and representatives from affected communities, creating a platform for inclusive dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

The workshop's significance extends beyond the immediate response to Cyclone Remal, as it represents BDRCS's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability to both donors and affected communities. By systematically documenting lessons learned, the organization seeks to strengthen its institutional memory and knowledge management systems, ensuring that valuable insights are not lost and can inform future decision-making processes. The timing of this workshop, following a series of complex emergencies, provided an opportunity to assess BDRCS's capacity to respond to multiple simultaneous disasters—a scenario that may become increasingly common due to climate change and other factors affecting disaster frequency and intensity in Bangladesh.

The lessons derived from this workshop are intended to serve as a foundation for enhancing BDRCS's strategic and operational approaches to disaster management. They will inform revisions to existing contingency plans, standard operating procedures, and response mechanisms. Additionally, the findings will guide capacity-building initiatives for staff and volunteers, improvements in resource allocation and management, and refinements to coordination mechanisms with government and other humanitarian actors. This report presents these lessons in a structured format, categorizing them into successes, challenges, and recommendations, with the ultimate goal of strengthening BDRCS's ability to fulfill its humanitarian mandate effectively and efficiently.

BDRCS Response Overview

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society mounted a comprehensive response to Cyclone Remal, activating its contingency plan immediately after receiving early warnings. More than 800 volunteers and staff were mobilized across affected areas, with 62 National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) members, including WASH specialists, deployed to support the operation. Targeted districts for comprehensive support under this response are – Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barguna, Barisal, Paruakhali and Bhola. Besides, the affected districts along with previous ones, are – Jessore, Narail, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Lakshmipur, Noakhali, Feni, Chattagram. These teams worked

tirelessly on the ground, often under challenging conditions, to reach communities cut off by flooding and infrastructure damage. The scale of mobilization reflected the serious nature of the disaster and BDRCS's commitment to providing timely assistance to those most in need.

In collaboration with the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), BDRCS teams worked day and night to disseminate early warning messages and help evacuate people from high-risk areas. This early action likely saved many lives as communities were able to move to safer locations before the cyclone made landfall. Cash support formed a significant component of the response, with 27,699 households receiving multipurpose cash grants totaling 16.79 Crore BDT (equivalent to CHF 1.24 million). The cash assistance gave affected families the flexibility to address their most pressing needs according to their own priorities, whether for food, shelter repairs, or other essential items.

Food security was another priority area, with BDRCS teams distributing seven-day food parcels to 16,600 families, reaching approximately 83,000 people. Water, sanitation, and hygiene needs were addressed through the provision of 359,250 liters of safe drinking water and distribution of 8,500 jerrycans to help families collect and store clean water. More than 2,000 hygiene parcels were distributed to promote good hygiene practices and prevent the spread of waterborne diseases. The construction of 63 household latrines further supported community sanitation efforts in areas where facilities had been damaged or destroyed.

Healthcare services were crucial in the aftermath of the cyclone, with nine mobile medical teams deployed to affected areas. These teams provided medical assistance to 11,089 patients suffering from various conditions, including injuries, infections, and chronic diseases exacerbated by the disaster. Recognizing the psychological impact of the disaster, BDRCS also provided psychosocial support to 1,852 people to help them cope with trauma and stress. Additionally, 25 volunteers received training on Epidemic Control for Volunteers (ECV), enhancing local capacity to prevent disease outbreaks. Four Maternal and Child Health centers were renovated to ensure continued access to essential healthcare services for vulnerable populations.

Shelter assistance was a critical component of the response, with more than 50,000 people receiving emergency shelter materials. This included the distribution of 9,600 tarpaulins, sleeping mats to 9,500 people, and 2,000 shelter toolkits to help families repair damaged homes or construct temporary shelters. Throughout the operation, BDRCS maintained its toll-free helpline (16226) to receive and address feedback and complaints from affected communities. The helpline received numerous calls, with 273 specific issues successfully addressed and resolved. Overall, the BDRCS response to Cyclone Remal reached approximately 140,000 people with various forms of assistance, demonstrating the organization's capacity to implement a multi-sectoral humanitarian response despite numerous challenges.

Methodology of Lessons Learned Process

The Lessons Learned Workshop for Cyclone Remal Response Operation used a step-by-step approach to gather honest feedback from everyone involved.

Lessons from Unit:

First, each local unit filled out a simple questionnaire using KOBO, a user-friendly digital tool. Red Crescent volunteers helped collect answers during group discussions at the unit level. These

discussions focused on what went well, what didn't work, and any creative solutions teams found during the response. The process made sure that the voices of those directly working in affected areas were heard and their experiences captured.

After collecting the initial feedback, the team conducted one-on-one interviews with key people involved in the operation. These included local unit officials, national disaster response team members, and community representatives. The interviews dug deeper into specific issues that came up in the questionnaires. People felt comfortable sharing both positive and negative experiences during these conversations. The interviews helped build a more complete picture of the operation and provided important context for understanding the challenges faced by responders.

Lessons from PDM:

The workshop team also looked at data from an earlier Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey that had asked cyclone-affected people about the help they received. This survey included feedback from 3,381 households across 11 districts. The PDM results gave direct insights from the people who received assistance, showing what worked well from their perspective and what could be improved. By comparing this feedback with the responders' own assessments, the team could verify findings and spot any differences in perception between those giving and receiving aid.

All the information from questionnaires, interviews, and the PDM survey was then put together into a clear presentation. The team organized findings into main themes like volunteer management, logistics, communication, and community engagement. The presentation included quotes and real examples to bring the lessons to life. This document served as the starting point for discussions during the workshop itself. Workshop participants could see a full picture of the operation before diving into detailed conversations about specific issues.

Lessons from the workshop:

The workshop was held on January 22, 2025 at Hotel Six Seasons, Gulshan, Dhaka. A detailed participants list is shared in the annex. During the workshop, BDRCS management and key staff reviewed the findings together. They talked openly about successes to build on and problems to solve. Small groups discussed specific topics and suggested practical solutions. The management team then created action points with clear responsibilities and timelines. These weren't just general recommendations but specific steps to improve future disaster responses. Every action point was documented to ensure accountability, with names attached to each task and deadlines for completion. This final step transformed lessons learned into concrete improvements for the future.

Key Successes

Community Engagement and Transparency Excellence

The BDRCS response to Cyclone Remal demonstrated several notable strengths, particularly in community-level operations. Volunteers conducted thorough door-to-door visits to identify the most vulnerable individuals, ensuring a fair and transparent selection process. This detailed approach helped target assistance to those who needed it most, including female-headed households, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities. The direct engagement with communities created trust and helped volunteers understand the specific needs of different groups. Many beneficiaries later

expressed appreciation for this careful selection process during the post-distribution monitoring interviews.

Communication with communities during data collection and beneficiary selection was effective and transparent. Volunteers took time to explain the selection criteria, assistance packages, and distribution processes to community members. They used simple language and visual aids when needed to ensure clear understanding. To protect against potential fraud, awareness banners were displayed in key locations, hotline number stickers were placed on walls, and public announcements were made via loudspeakers. These proactive measures helped build community trust and prevented misunderstandings about the nature and scope of the assistance being provided.

Institutional Coordination and Problem-Solving Capabilities

Coordination with government stakeholders emerged as another significant success. BDRCS teams established and maintained strong working relationships with local officials, including Project Implementation Officers (PIOs), Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), and Deputy Commissioners (DCs) throughout the operation. This coordination helped overcome bureaucratic hurdles, facilitated access to affected areas, and prevented duplication of efforts. Regular coordination meetings kept all parties informed about progress and challenges. When issues arose, such as difficulties in accessing remote locations, government partners often provided support with transportation or security arrangements.

The operation also demonstrated strong problem-solving capabilities. When issues arose, such as fraudulent attempts to replace beneficiary accounts, teams identified and resolved these problems promptly. In one notable example, staff discovered attempts to divert cash transfers to unauthorized mobile accounts. They immediately implemented additional verification steps, including photo ID checks and confirmation calls, to ensure assistance reached the intended recipients. This adaptability and quick response to emerging challenges protected the integrity of the operation and maintained donor confidence in the assistance delivery process.

Exceptional Human Resource Commitment

Perhaps most remarkable was the exceptional dedication shown by volunteers throughout the response. Many overcame significant personal challenges, including traveling long distances in adverse weather conditions, to complete their assigned tasks. Some volunteers used their own resources when official allowances were delayed. Female volunteers showed particular courage in navigating both physical hazards and social barriers to reach vulnerable community members. This dedication was also evident in the medical response, where doctors showed patience and care while treating large numbers of patients, often working extended hours to ensure all those seeking help received attention. Their commitment truly exemplified the humanitarian spirit of the Red Crescent Movement.

Challenges Encountered

External Environmental and Systemic Constraints

The Cyclone Remal operation faced significant leadership difficulties that complicated response efforts. Political unrest and government changes since July 2024 caused branch instability, with many executive committee members largely unavailable when needed. This created gaps in decision-making

and delayed authorizations for critical activities. Field teams often struggled to get timely approvals for expenditures and operational decisions. Despite these leadership challenges, response activities continued through the dedication of staff and volunteers who found ways to work around the governance issues. In some cases, long-serving volunteers stepped in to provide informal leadership when formal structures were absent.

Civil unrest throughout the country hindered timely completion of needs assessments and disrupted overall communication and mobility. Assessment teams frequently encountered roadblocks, transportation strikes, and security concerns that limited their ability to reach affected areas. This delayed the collection of crucial information about community needs and damages, which in turn affected planning and resource allocation. Mobile network disruptions further complicated coordination efforts, making it difficult for field teams to report findings or receive guidance. These delays meant that some assistance arrived when immediate needs had already evolved, reducing the effectiveness of the response.

The operation was further complicated by a series of frequent disasters starting from April 2024. Bangladesh was affected by extreme heat waves, multiple flooding events, and ongoing civil unrest before and during the Cyclone Remal response. This sequence of crises stretched BDRCS resources thin and fatigued volunteers and staff who had been responding to emergencies for months without adequate rest periods. Many local units were still managing flood response activities when they had to pivot to cyclone preparedness and response. The cumulative impact of these multiple disasters overwhelmed storage facilities, depleted emergency stocks, and complicated logistics planning.

Internal Operational System Deficiencies

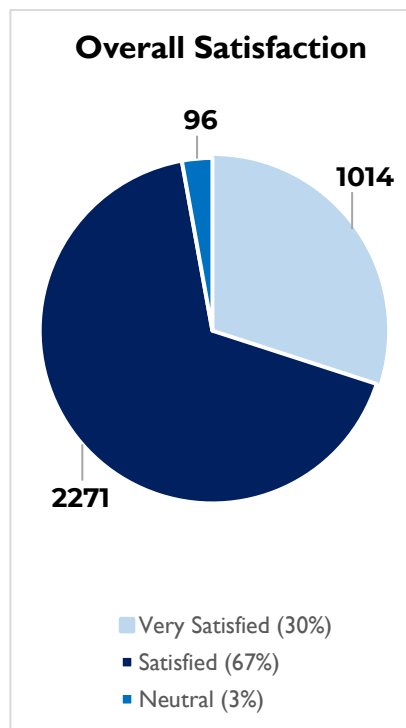
Volunteer welfare emerged as a significant concern throughout the operation. Insufficient travel allowances caused financial strain for many volunteers, particularly those working in remote areas where transportation costs were high. Delays in reimbursement compounded these difficulties, with some volunteers waiting weeks to be repaid for out-of-pocket expenses. The lack of budgetary provisions for emergencies meant that volunteers sometimes became stranded in remote areas without resources to return. Female Red Crescent Youth volunteers faced particular challenges during overnight stays when emergencies arose. Transportation challenges, including the practice of three volunteers sharing a single motorcycle, increased both safety risks and operational delays.

Logistics and procurement issues also hampered the effectiveness of the response. The bureaucratic procurement processes delayed the acquisition of essential items, including medicines for mobile medical teams. When supplies finally arrived, some had quality issues – damaged packaging (such as cracked oil bottles), poor quality hygiene items, and food items that were spoiled or had unusual odors. Extended storage of food packages led to spoilage and infestation before distribution in some cases. The lack of adequate storage facilities for medicine and other perishable items exacerbated these problems. Additionally, financial regulations created complications when working with local vendors who did not have bank accounts, as BDRCS procedures required bank transfers for payments.

Beneficiary Feedback and PDM Results

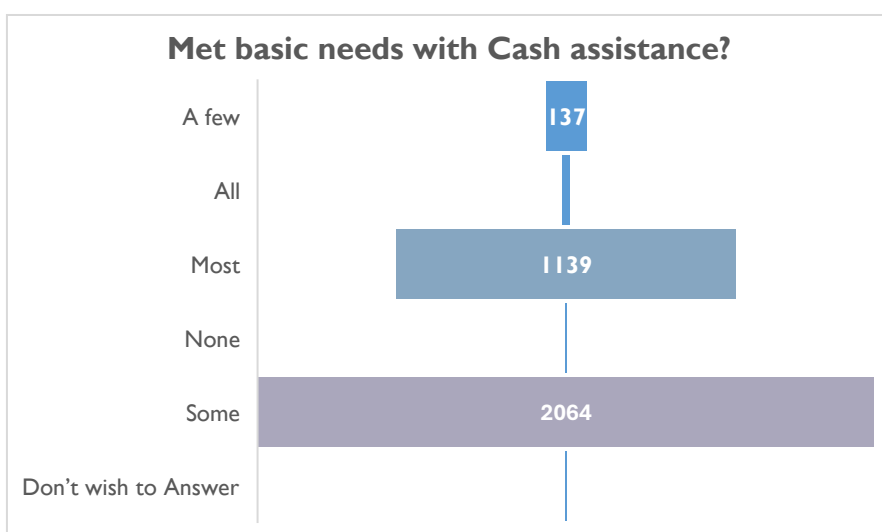
The Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey conducted after the Cyclone Remal operation provided valuable insights into beneficiary experiences and perceptions. The survey engaged 3,381 households across 11 districts, capturing a representative sample of those who received assistance. Demographics of respondents showed diversity, with 93% aged 18-59 and 7% aged 60 or above. Gender distribution revealed that 59% of households were headed by males and 19% by females. Notably, 6% of surveyed households reported having at least one member with a disability, indicating the operation's reach to vulnerable groups. These demographic details helped BDRCS understand the composition of assisted populations and inform future targeting strategies.

Satisfaction levels among beneficiaries were remarkably high, with 97% reporting overall satisfaction with the assistance received. Specifically, 30% described themselves as "very satisfied" and 67% as "satisfied," while only 3% expressed neutral feelings. This positive feedback extended to interactions with BDRCS personnel, with 96% of respondents stating they were treated well by staff and volunteers during the operation. Similar appreciation was shown for financial service providers, with 83% reporting good treatment by agents, though 17% indicated the service was only "mostly" satisfactory. These high satisfaction rates suggest that despite operational challenges, the beneficiaries' experience was largely positive.

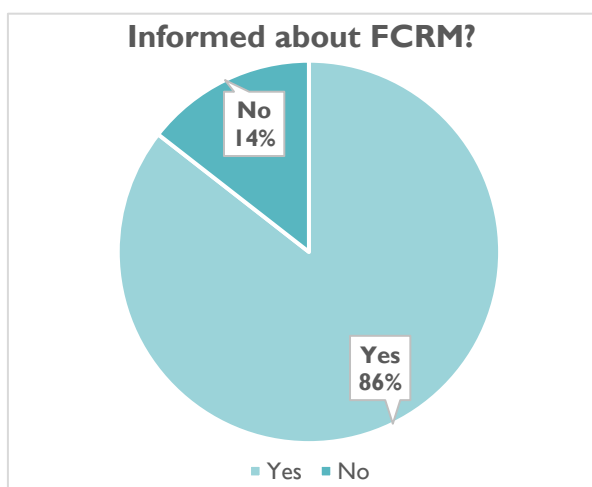


The distribution process itself received strong approval from beneficiaries. An overwhelming 99% reported that distributions were well-organized, and 90% stated they had been informed well in advance about distribution processes for both cash and non-food items. The efficiency of distribution was also highlighted, with 75% of respondents waiting less than 30 minutes to collect cash assistance. Safety concerns were minimal, as 98% of beneficiaries felt completely secure while traveling to receive assistance. However, 2% reported feeling unsafe due to long distances to cash-out points or distribution centers, combined with limited transportation options. These findings indicate effective logistics planning while also identifying areas for improvement in accessibility.

Cash assistance formed a significant component of the response, with 89% of surveyed households receiving only cash support, while 9% received 7-day food packages and 1% received hygiene parcels. The integrity of the cash transfer process was strong, with 99% of beneficiaries confirming they received the full intended amount of 6,000 BDT. Only three cases reported discrepancies, attributed to withdrawal fees deducted by mobile money agents



or funds taken by relatives without consent. Regarding the impact of this assistance, 61% reported that the funds helped meet "some" of their basic needs, while 33% stated it met "most" of their requirements. This feedback suggests that while the cash amount provided meaningful support, it was insufficient to fully address the range of needs following the cyclone.



Community engagement and accountability mechanisms showed both strengths and areas for improvement. While 86% of respondents were aware of feedback and complaint response mechanisms, 14% had not been informed about these channels. Among those who knew about the mechanisms, 11% (360 people) had actually used them to raise concerns. Of these, 319 complaints received responses, but 41 complaints were not addressed or resolved. The survey also revealed concerns about beneficiary selection, with 43% believing that some deserving people were excluded from assistance, and

23% suggesting that many vulnerable individuals had been left out. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening two-way communication channels and improving transparency in selection criteria to enhance community trust and program effectiveness.

Key Recommendations

Volunteer Support and Welfare

- **Establish comprehensive volunteer financial support systems with pre-positioned emergency funds.** Adequate and timely travel allowances should be provided with pre-approval systems, while emergency funds at unit level address unforeseen circumstances like volunteers becoming stranded due to weather or transportation disruptions.
- **Implement advance payment systems instead of reimbursement-based approaches.** Update volunteer per diem policies to reflect current costs of food, accommodation, and transportation. This prevents volunteers from experiencing financial hardship during deployments and ensures more effective service delivery.
- **Provide quality safety equipment and ensure proper transportation arrangements.** Safety equipment should be available in appropriate sizes and sufficient quantities, with proper transportation arrangements including safety measures to address the practice of multiple volunteers sharing single motorcycles.

Procurement and Logistics

- **Develop simplified procurement procedures specifically for emergency situations.** Streamlined processes should reduce bureaucratic steps while maintaining accountability, with framework agreements established with pre-approved vendors for commonly needed items to allow rapid procurement without compromising quality standards.
- **Strengthen quality control mechanisms throughout the entire supply chain.** Regular inspection protocols should be implemented for food items, hygiene materials, and

other relief supplies before distribution, with third-party inspection protocols and separate packaging for fragile items like oil bottles.

- **Invest in appropriate storage facilities for perishable items and medicines.** Adequate storage infrastructure would prevent deterioration and waste of relief supplies, addressing the extended storage issues that led to spoilage and infestation during the Cyclone Remal response.

Coordination and Communication

- **Strengthen internal communication channels and establish Emergency Operations Center (EOC).** Regular coordination meetings with clear documentation should be conducted, while EOC activation would provide regular monitoring and information sharing with concerned departments through shared dashboard links.
- **Develop contingency plans for communication during network disruptions or civil unrest.** Standardized information sharing protocols with government authorities would strengthen partnerships and reduce duplication of efforts, while maintaining operational continuity in challenging situations.
- **Formalize engagement with local leaders and provide orientation to local administration.** Community representatives should be involved in planning and beneficiary selection processes to enhance transparency and local ownership, with proper orientation provided on BDRCS procedures and protocols.

Beneficiary Selection and Distribution

- **Develop clear, context-specific selection criteria with community participation in verification.** Selection criteria should be developed prior to operations with consistent application across all locations, while community participation in beneficiary list verification helps identify genuine cases and reduce exclusion errors.
- **Optimize mobile data collection tools for vulnerability assessment and establish mechanisms to mitigate political influence.** Tools should capture vulnerability indicators more effectively and enable real-time monitoring of selection processes, while training volunteers on vulnerability assessment and protection principles enhances their capacity to identify those most in need.
- **Consider multiple distribution methods based on context and reduce additional threshold range to 5%.** Distribution approaches should be flexible (cash, direct distribution) depending on local circumstances, with clear communication of exclusion criteria to enhance transparency and community understanding.

Community Engagement and Accountability

- **Simplify feedback mechanisms and establish diverse communication channels.** The hotline service should eliminate requirements for beneficiaries to provide serial numbers they may not know, while diverse feedback channels should accommodate varying literacy levels and access to technology.
- **Ensure comprehensive complaint response and provide clear communication about assistance processes.** All complaints should receive responses and appropriate action, while clear communication about assistance entitlements, selection criteria, and distribution processes builds community trust and understanding.

- **Conduct regular community meetings and train staff on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion principles.** Community meetings throughout operations provide spaces for dialogue and adjustments based on community input, while PGI and CEA training enhances staff and volunteer capacity to serve vulnerable populations effectively.

Action Plan

The Cyclone Remal Lessons Learned Workshop produced a comprehensive action plan that transforms identified challenges into specific, time-bound solutions with designated responsibilities. Workshop participants systematically analyzed operational gaps and developed actionable interventions addressing contingency planning, procurement systems, volunteer support, and coordination mechanisms. Critical areas requiring immediate attention include reactivating contingency plans through re-orientation sessions at National Headquarters, establishing framework agreements with pre-approved vendors to streamline emergency procurement, and resolving financial management issues such as the problematic practice of taking emergency advances in personal bank accounts. The plan directly responds to operational difficulties highlighted during the response, particularly insufficient volunteer support systems, delayed procurement processes, and coordination gaps that hampered effective service delivery to affected communities.



Picture 1 Briefing session for participants before preparing the Action Plan

Implementation priorities are structured across immediate (within 3 months), short-term (3-6 months), medium-term (6-12 months), and strategic timeframes, ensuring systematic organizational improvement. Immediate priorities focus on activating the Emergency Operations Center for better information flow, establishing clear reporting mechanisms with Movement partners, and implementing proper safety measures for volunteer mobilization. Medium-term priorities emphasize capacity building through specialized volunteer training and developing comprehensive management response systems to address recurring operational issues.

The action plan specifically addresses Movement partners' concerns about information sharing and coordination, while tackling systemic challenges including political influence mitigation, enhanced procurement catalogs, and integrated training between BDRCS and the Cyclone Preparedness Programme. This structured approach ensures that lessons learned translate into tangible operational improvements rather than remaining theoretical recommendations, positioning BDRCS to respond more effectively to future disasters in Bangladesh's increasingly complex emergency environment.

Priority Tasks

Immediate Priorities (Within 3 Months):

- Activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with regular monitoring and information flow protocols

- Establish clear reporting frequency and information sharing mechanisms with Movement partners
- Develop a framework agreement system with pre-approved vendors for emergency procurement
- Implement proper safety measures for volunteer mobilization, including quality equipment and transportation
- Create a streamlined financial approval process for emergency situations, including bearer cheque options

Short-term Priorities (3-6 Months):

- Complete re-orientation, review, and revision of the Contingency Plan at NHQ level
- Develop a comprehensive procurement catalog with detailed specifications for relief items
- Establish a digital fundraising system, including BDRCS credit card facility
- Provide PGI and CEA orientation to all disaster response personnel
- Implement SMS-based early warning system for community awareness

Medium-term Priorities (6-12 Months):

- Train upazila-level volunteers in specialized skills (SAR, First Aid, PSS, WASH, Shelter, Livelihood)
- Develop a comprehensive management response plan to address recurring issues
- Strengthen BDRCS response capacity, especially in the Disaster Response department
- Establish measurements to mitigate political influence in local unit operations
- Integrate BDRCS functions into CPP training and vice-versa for improved coordination

Strategic Priorities:

- Develop a comprehensive risk mapping process with tailored mitigation strategies
- Create specific protocols for coordination between CPP and BDRCS during emergency operations
- Establish clear guidelines for deploying district officers for anticipatory action support
- Advocate with local government for pre-agreed food access declarations during emergencies
- Implement a simplified procurement policy specifically for anticipatory actions

Conclusion

The lessons learned from the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society's response to Cyclone Remal have provided valuable insights for strengthening future disaster management operations. The comprehensive evaluation process, involving self-assessments, key informant interviews, and post-

distribution monitoring data, has revealed both significant achievements and areas requiring improvement. Through this reflective process, BDRCS has demonstrated its commitment to accountability, continuous learning, and enhancing its humanitarian service delivery to vulnerable communities affected by disasters in Bangladesh.

The Cyclone Remal operation successfully reached approximately 140,000 people with various forms of assistance despite facing multiple challenges, including political unrest, leadership gaps, and logistical constraints. The dedication of volunteers and staff was particularly noteworthy, with many going above and beyond their duties to ensure assistance reached those most in need. The operation's multi-sectoral approach, incorporating cash assistance, food security, water and sanitation, healthcare, and shelter support, demonstrated BDRCS's capacity to implement a comprehensive humanitarian response in complex emergency situations. These successes provide a solid foundation for building future response capabilities.

The detailed action plan developed during the workshop represents a concrete commitment to addressing the identified challenges. With clear responsibilities assigned and specific timelines established, BDRCS is well-positioned to implement necessary improvements before the next disaster strikes. Priority areas including contingency planning, procurement systems, volunteer support, coordination mechanisms, and community engagement have been thoroughly analyzed, with practical solutions developed for each. The emphasis on accountability and follow-up mechanisms will be crucial in ensuring that these recommendations do not remain theoretical but translate into tangible operational improvements.

The recurring nature of disasters in Bangladesh, highlighted by the series of crises experienced in 2024 alone, underscores the importance of strengthening BDRCS's preparedness and response systems. Climate change projections suggest that extreme weather events may become more frequent and intense in the coming years, potentially leading to compound disasters similar to those experienced during the Cyclone Remal response period. By systematically addressing the issues identified in this lessons learned process, BDRCS will enhance its resilience and capacity to respond effectively to these increasing challenges, ultimately fulfilling its humanitarian mandate more efficiently and comprehensively.

As BDRCS moves forward with implementing the recommendations from this workshop, continued monitoring and evaluation will be essential to track progress and ensure accountability. Regular reviews of action plan implementation, combined with ongoing feedback mechanisms for staff, volunteers, and affected communities, will help sustain the momentum for improvement generated by this lessons learned process. Through this commitment to organizational learning and adaptation, BDRCS strengthens not only its own operational capabilities but also contributes to the broader humanitarian community's understanding of effective disaster response in complex environments. The lessons from Cyclone Remal thus serve as valuable guidance not just for future BDRCS operations but potentially for other humanitarian actors working in similar contexts.

Annexes

The detailed action plan developed during the Cyclone Remal Lessons Learned Workshop is attached as an annex to this report. The action plan includes specific issues identified, proposed solutions, responsible departments, and implementation timelines. Additional annexes include:

I. [Workshop Presentation](#) Consisting

- The Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey results, providing quantitative data on beneficiary satisfaction, assistance effectiveness, and program quality.
 - Results of the self-assessment questionnaires completed by implementing units using the KOBO tool, offering insights into operational challenges and successes from the perspective of field teams.
 - Summaries of Key Informant Interviews (KII) conducted with stakeholders, including Unit officials, NDRT members, and community representatives.
 - Photographic documentation of the response operation, capturing key activities, challenges, and innovations implemented by BDRCS teams.
2. Workshop agenda, participant list, and methodology used for the Lessons Learned Workshop; documenting the process of reflection and detail action plan can be found [here](#).
 3. Photo gallery (Next Page)

These annexes provide comprehensive supporting documentation for the findings, recommendations, and action plans presented in the main report. They serve as valuable reference materials for BDRCS management, staff, volunteers, and partners involved in implementing the recommended improvements and planning future disaster response operations.

Photo Gallery



Picture 1 Honorable Secretary General Kabir M. Ashraf while giving his speech



Picture 2 Workshop guests during inaugural session



Picture 3 Director Disaster Response Department while giving his speech on cyclone Remal operation



Picture 4 Participants during their group work



Picture 5 PNS Participant while presenting group work findings



Picture 6 Participant while sharing her reflection on Cyclone Remal Lessons