

Bangladesh and Pakistan

Advancing the Leadership of Women and Girls Towards Better Health and Climate Change Resilience

Background

The effects of climate change have exacerbated the already fragile state of women's health in low-resource settings. Poverty, limited health systems and infrastructure, and high risk from natural disasters place a disproportionate burden on women to manage their everyday health while preparing for evolving challenges.

Climate Change: Impacts on Women and Girls

Communities most vulnerable to the climate crisis often face the highest barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights. In humanitarian situations, they grow higher still, with even the most basic care upended. Pathfinder elevates women and girls as changemakers in their communities, engaging them to lead resilient, local, and rights-based solutions to climate adaptation by:



Meeting unmet needs for contraception and sexual and reproductive health care, essential to women's and girls' agency.



Investing in girls' agency, education, and literacy, including climate awareness.



Supporting women's engagement and leadership in local resilience planning.



Strengthening the capacity of health systems to prepare for and effectively manage health risks due to climate change.



Bangladeshi girl crosses a flooded street at DND dam in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Photo: Hasan Ali

Program Goal: Our program, **Advancing the Leadership of Women and Girls Towards Better Health and Climate Change Resilience**, works alongside women and girls in low-resource communities to develop the tools, knowledge, networks, and resources they need to ensure reliable access to quality health services, build foundations for economic growth, and to strengthen their communities and health systems so they are resilient to future shocks.

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Countries: Bangladesh and Pakistan

Bangladesh and Pakistan are significantly affected by climate change. Gender inequalities and gender-based violence further reduce women's capacity to survive, thrive, and transform communities. Our program will work with communities and health systems affected by rising temperatures, flooding, storms, drought, and other climate change-related events to improve their health and climate change resilience.

Pathfinder's approach centers women as change agents, strengthening their knowledge and access to equitable, quality health services while building community resilience to future shocks and enhancing economic opportunities.



Women walk in Sindh, Pakistan, a region affected by climate change. Photo: Muzamil Bhatti



Resilient Health Systems

Build resilient, adaptable, quality health systems able to meet the primary health needs of low-resource communities and withstand emergency shocks.

Approaches:

Strengthen health system capacity through trainings and sensitization to promote health, prevent disease, improve service delivery and referrals, and increase collaboration with vulnerable communities.

Introduce links within health systems that engage communities to reduce gender-based violence.

Build the capacity of community health workers and providers to prevent and manage consequences of sexual violence, reduce disease transmission, and prevent maternal and newborn deaths.



Women's and Girls' Agency

Our program will support women and girls in low-resource communities to gain the tools, knowledge, networks, and resources to survive and build resilience to future crises.

Approaches:

Identify and engage community champions to build trust and support within communities and grow the role of communities in ensuring continuous access to quality health services.

Conduct gender-transformative trainings for champions, partners, and peers to amplify voices and develop links with local stakeholders.

Use innovative digital health technologies to build connections to local health services.



Evidence Generation and Learning

Our program will develop an integrated collaboration, learning, and adaptation framework, supporting implementation and evidence for decision making, advocacy, and social good.

Approaches:

Through participatory processes with communities and health systems, we will:

- Diagnose risks and emerging challenges.
- Adapt evidence-based, scalable, and durable solutions to local contexts.
- Use innovative digital approaches and communication platforms to ensure access to health care.

Develop partnerships across the public, private sector, non-profit sector, academia, and social entrepreneurs to share knowledge, foster cost-effective sustainable solutions, and prototype new innovations.

Create an enabling environment through support for conducive policies, increased government involvement, and budget allocations.

Pathfinder International is driven by the conviction that all people, regardless of where they live, have the right to decide whether and when to have children, to exist free from fear and stigma, and to lead the lives they choose. As a global health organization with locally led, community-driven programs, we support women to make their own reproductive health decisions. We work with local partners to advance contraceptive services, comprehensive abortion care, and young people's sexual and reproductive rights in communities around the world—including those affected by poverty, conflict, climate change, and natural disasters. Taken together, our programs enable millions of people to choose their own paths forward.

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