The coastal Bangladesh was ravaged by yet another severe cyclone in May 2020. The Cyclone Amphan formed on 16 May 2020 over the Indian Ocean and started moving north over the Bay of Bengal, towards north-east India coastal areas and south of Bangladesh. On 20 May, the Bangladesh meteorological department (BMD) issued “great danger” signal number 10 for costal districts of Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Jhalokathi, Firozpur, Borguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, Barisal, Laxmipur, Chandpur and their off-shore islands and chars.

Under the influence of the ‘very severe’ cyclonic storm Amphan, it was anticipated that Feni, Chattagram and their offshore islands and chars are likely to be inundated by storm surge of 4 to 5 feet height above the normal astronomical tide. The total coastal districts were likely to experience wind speed up to 140 to 160kmp/h in gusts/squalls with heavy to very heavy falls during the passage of storm. All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay and deep sea was advised to take shelter immediately and will remain in the shelter till further notice. Following the great danger signal and evacuation order of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), more than 2.4 million people were moved to 14,636 permanent and temporary shelters in 19 coastal districts before the cyclone hit the country’s coast. During this time, the number of shelters has been increased considering the physical distancing norm and guidelines due to COVID-19.

Cyclone Amphan had weakened from a super cyclone to an “extremely severe cyclonic storm” between the 20th and the 21st May 2020, causing strong winds and heavy rain in parts of Odisha, West Bengal in India and Bangladesh coastal areas as it advanced towards the India-Bangladesh coast. On 20 May 2020, it slammed into the coastal districts of West Bengal, India and then it entered Bangladesh at evening with wind speed of 150kmp/h and drove its destruction among 26 districts across the country. According to different sources, Cyclone Amphan affected more than a million people in nine districts in Khulna and Barishal divisions of Bangladesh on 20 May. (Operation update report, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, May 2020). UNDP reports that:

- 26 people were killed
- 55,667 houses were completely damaged, and around 162,000 partially damaged
- approximately 149,000 hectares of agriculture lands and fish farms worth about BDT 3.25 billion (CHF 36 million) were damaged
- millions of trees were uprooted
- 150kms of protection embankments were washed away at 84 points in 13 districts
- 200 bridges and culverts, and 100km of roads were damaged
- about 15 million clients lost electricity
- many freshwater ponds inside forests were flooded with seawater
- approximately 18,235 water points and 40,894 latrines were destroyed in most impacted districts
- preliminary estimates of total cost of damages caused by the cyclone is BDT 11 billion (CHF 123 million)
- The coastal region of Cox’s Bazar did not suffer the brunt of the cyclone except for some minor wind damages and heavy rains.

Community Development Center (CODEC) is currently implementing several projects in some areas where Cyclone Amphan caused devastation. Information of the Projects that were effected by Cyclone Amphan are provided in the following sections;

THE SALT SOLUTION PROJECT, CODEC, KHULNA & BARISHAL REGION

The Salt Solution Project, CODEC funded by ICCO cooperation is working to introduce saline tolerant crop to farmers and also sensitize government department to increase the food production of vulnerable farming families and enhance their food security and income. The cyclone Amphan caused many devastations in the projects’ working area of Khulna and Bagerhat region where many of farmers who are supported by the project is affected.
For the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, it was also very difficult to provide immediate assistance to the affected farmers. However, we have tried to communicate with our farmers and other stakeholders through over phone to get a picture of the immediate impacts/damages of their demonstration plots and found overall 83-85% of standing crops along with trellis have been damaged fully. The remaining standing plants/crops were comparatively weak and died due to stagnant water in root zone area.

Approximately 3652 ha lands (Barguna Sadar 100 ha, Tal哈利 85 ha, Kalapara 2479 ha, Galachipa 790 ha, Dacope 198.6 ha) and 1546 ha of vegetable production land (Barguna Sadar 65 ha, Tal哈利 53 ha, Kalapara 700 ha, Galachipa 50 ha, Dacope 123.2 ha, Koyra 505 ha) were affected severely in our project’s working area of Khulna and Barishal divisions. 4238 Farmers in these areas lost their produce completely for the cyclone Amphan. We also assume that 80% of the remaining crops will be damaged when the sunlight will heat up the injured crops and there is also the risk of the spread of fungal diseases.

The project started its field activity from 03rd November’19 and as of today we have selected 1000 HHs of Mohipur, Nilgonj, Lotachapli and Dhulasar unions under Kalaparaupazilla and provided vegetable cultivation and DRR awareness development training to 300 beneficiaries. Before Amphan Cyclone made landfall the project supported preparatory meeting with the community representatives on 19th May ’2020 to discuss and disseminate resilience related knowledge before during and after the cyclone. Most of the beneficiaries of our working area took shelter in cyclone shelters and in schools through government initiatives, still, a portion stayed at their own homes due to fear of COVID 19 and dense gathering in the shelter. Fortunately, there was no death of our project beneficiaries. During the month of June, the project has just provided five types of improved summer vegetable seeds among 300 beneficiaries through maintaining social distance accordingly.

CODEC Agricultural Unit supported by PKSF is working proactively with the farmers of Laxmipur even in this time of COVID 19 Pandemic and natural disasters. Our Agriculture Unit is supporting 250 farmers directly and over 2000 farmers indirectly in Laxmipur by providing training and financial assistance to cultivate high value and high yielding crops like Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Onion, Garlic etc. The Agriculture Unit in Laxmipur is working relentlessly with the help of CODEC micro finance and achieving great results even in this COVID 19 context. In this Pandemic situation food production is very important for Bangladesh. We very pleased that CODEC Micro-Finance is supporting farmers and helping them to maximize food production.