

## MANGROVES FOR THE FUTURE (MFF) INITIATIVE

Shyamnagar sub-district, Satkhira district-near Sundarbans, Bangladesh

The capacity of mangroves to mitigate extreme climate events became apparent after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. Mangroves, a key component of coastal ecosystems, are threatened by climate change, putting at risk the survival of communities whose lives depend on ecosystem services. The Mangroves for the Future (MFF) initiative focuses on ecosystem restoration and livelihood diversification, promoting sound coastal resource management policies and practices, strengthening resilience of coastal communities in eleven countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The MFF programme is co-chaired by IUCN and UNDP and has numerous institutional and implementing partners. A Regional Steering Committee (RSC) provides strategic guidance and a National Coordinating Body (NCB), with representatives from Government, civil society organizations and private sector oversees implementation in each partner country.

At the national level, policymakers from the Government, civil society and private sector were engaged through the NCB chaired by the Secretary of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to create a space for effective policy dialogues. A participatory resilience analysis process was carried out at the field level to promote a common understanding of the site-specific context and issues, and develop a shared vision, allowing extensive dialogues among community members, youth, professionals, local leaders and NGOs, and promote local actions through MFF grant facilities.

By identifying key issues and priority action areas, communities contributed to define the best nature-based solutions and strategies to increase climate adaptation and resilience. As a result, over 400 hectares of mangroves have been rehabilitated and the ecosystem has bounced back, with enhanced fish catch for villagers. This has also taught the community to value mangroves as a natural infrastructure for protection against cyclones and to come together to form a conservation group. In addition, the re-excavation of a canal transformed the landscape and life of the marginal farmers and indigenous Munda community, improving their connectivity and increasing the cultivated area from 6 to 120 acres. This led to a 60 per cent rise in agriculture production. By practicing climate-smart agriculture using the water stored in re-excavated canals and ponds, more than 1,200 marginal farmers could cultivate a second or alternative crop, like wheat, contributing significantly to better income and improved food security. Working together with communities to address drinking water issues resulted in better opportunities for women, reducing their time spent in fetching water and providing more than 750 families access to safe potable water.



**International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

<https://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/countries/members/bangladesh/>

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Photo by Amin Raquibul