Local Rights Programme (LRP)-43

Title of LRP	**Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Practices to Strengthen Food Security of the poor and Marginalized Through Accessing Rights (PSAP-SFS-PMTAR)**		
Number of LRP	**Local Rights Programme (LRP)-43**		
Duration of LRP	**15+ Years**		
Starting Year	2011	**Phase-out Year**	2026
Implementing Partner	**Voluntary Association for Rural Development (VARD)**		
Location of LRP	Sylhet, Sunamganj, Bishwamvarpur		
	Union	Badaghat (Dokhin)	

Background

The Local Rights Programme (LRP) is ActionAid's long-term approach to addressing chronic poverty, exclusion and climate vulnerabilities in marginalized communities. Over a 5-10-year period, LRPs strengthen community organizations, promote women's and youth leadership and support rights holders to claim essential services while building resilience against disasters.

ActionAid Bangladesh implements LRP-43 in the remote haor region of Sunamganj, specifically Bishwamvarpur Upazila that one of the most isolated and disaster-prone areas in the country. The area faces recurrent flash floods, seasonal waterlogging, limited livelihoods and widespread landlessness, leading to food insecurity, disrupted education and poor access to health, water and sanitation services.

Local livelihoods rely on agriculture, day labor, fishing and petty trade, yet unequal access to land and water resources keeps many families in extreme poverty. Women and girls face entrenched gender inequality, early marriage, violence and restricted decision-making power. Children are at risk of school dropout, hazardous labor and poor health.

Under the title **"Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Practices to Strengthen Food Security of the Poor and Marginalized Through Accessing Rights"** LRP-43 works to overcome these challenges by empowering REFLECT Circles, farmer's groups, women's groups, youth forums and child-led bodies. The programme promotes sustainable agriculture, improves access to productive resources and safety nets and supports alternative livelihoods for vulnerable households.

The initiative also prioritizes women's empowerment, addressing gender-based violence and strengthening child rights through education support, child spaces and linkages with schools and service providers.

Through these integrated efforts, ActionAid Bangladesh aims to build resilient, food-secure and rights-aware communities where women, youth and children can live with dignity in the haor basin of Sunamganj.

Issues (As per PRRP, 2025)

Bishwambarpur Upazila, located in the haor basin of Sunamganj, is highly vulnerable to recurrent flash floods, heavy rainfall from the Meghalaya hills and seasonal waterlogging. The region's economy depends heavily on agriculture, day labor and fishing that all of which are climate-sensitive and unstable. Limited infrastructure, widespread landlessness, deep-rooted social norms, and inadequate access to essential services worsen the community's vulnerabilities. Children, adolescents, women and marginalized households are particularly affected by these intersecting challenges.

- **Child Labor (Highest Rank):** Economic hardship and limited livelihood options push children into hazardous work, affecting their education, safety and development.
- **Lack of Alternative Income Opportunities (High Priority):** Families rely heavily on seasonal agriculture and labor, with few climate-resilient livelihood options, increasing poverty and food insecurity.
- **Unawareness of Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (MNCH):** Limited health knowledge leads to malnutrition, unsafe childbirth practices, and preventable illnesses.

- **Mobile Addiction Among Children:** Growing digital dependency affects children's learning, behavior and overall wellbeing.
- **Child Marriage:** Social norms, insecurity and poverty contribute to early marriage, particularly for girls.
- **Social and Religious Superstitions:** Traditional beliefs hinder access to education, healthcare and modern practices.
- **Migration:** Seasonal or distress migration disrupts family stability, education, and community cohesion.
- **Drug Use and Gambling:** Rising substance abuse threatens youth health, safety and community security.
- **Water Scarcity:** Many families face difficulties accessing safe drinking water, increasing risks of disease.
- **Repeated Flooding and Flash Floods:** Flash floods destroy standing crops (especially Boro and Aman), damage homes, and disrupt schooling and livelihoods.
- **Thunderstorms, Floods and Hill Rain:** These hazards further increase risks to life, agriculture, and infrastructure.
- **Underdeveloped Communication Infrastructure:** Remote villages lack proper roads, hampering transport, education access and emergency response.

LRP Participants: Smallholder farmers, landless families, day laborers, fishing households, women-headed households, adolescent girls, children, youth groups and community volunteers.

Programme Participant Groups

Reflection-Action Circle (RAC)	Youth Group	Community Journalist Group (CJG)	Child Forum	Child Space/ Shishu Bikash Kendra	Sponsorship Children
25	01	02	20	20	454

LRP Objectives

1. Protect and promote the rights and dignity of marginalized people, especially women, children and young people.
2. Empower communities to analyze problems, identify root causes and take collective action.
3. Establish and strengthen People's Organizations for sustainable change.
4. Promote child development and rights through Shishu Bikash Kendras (SBKs).
5. Mobilize civil society and ensure community participation in planning, implementation and monitoring.
6. Contribute to ActionAid's priorities on gender equity, youth empowerment, climate justice and humanitarian response.

Key Achievements (As per PRRP, 2025)

Climate Justice, Climate Resilience & Environmental Sustainability

- Successfully developed **25 CRSA model vermicompost units**, strengthening eco-friendly livelihood options and soil health.
- Distributed **314 saplings and seed packages** to promote homestead gardening, nutrition, and climate-smart agriculture practices.

Women's Leadership, Empowerment & Livelihoods

- Enabled **560 women** to participate in income-generating activities, significantly contributing to household income and economic resilience.
- Supported **10 GBV survivors and climate-vulnerable women** with IGAs (vermicompost, CRSA-focused initiatives), advancing their economic autonomy.
- Strengthened women's leadership with **18 women** actively engaged in decision-making platforms (SMC, CSG, CG, UH&FWC committees).

Youth Empowerment & Skills Development

- Supported **12 girls** with tailored IGA initiatives, boosting their economic participation.

Child Rights, Education & Development

- Provided **scholarship assistance to 10 vulnerable girls**, ensuring educational continuity.
- Provided **emergency support to 9 children**, ensuring timely protection and welfare.

Child Protection, Safeguarding & SRHR

- Established **3 SRHR corners in schools**, offering adolescent girls a safe space for information and services.

Health, WASH & Social Development

- Organized **1 eye camp** in partnership with VARD Eye Hospital providing vital health services to marginalized groups.
- Installed/ensured access to safety nets and services: **142 VGD**, **252 VGF**, **101 old-age**, **33 widow**, **31 disability**, **20 maternity**, **246 TCB supports**, **6 deep tube wells**, and **31 warm clothes**—reflecting successful local advocacy and collaborations.

Governance, Community Mobilization & Advocacy

- Published **1 issue of "Trinomul Barta"**, documenting community voices and progress.
- Conducted **1 networking meeting** with Press Club, LG representatives, and government officials to strengthen local advocacy.