

BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

# Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience

## South and Central Asia

*Fiscal Year (FY) 2021*



Populations throughout South and Central Asia are vulnerable to a range of natural disasters, including cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, floods, and landslides. These hazards compound existing vulnerabilities faced by many communities in the region. In FY 2021, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) supported a range of programs to build resilience and promote enhanced emergency preparedness, supporting community members and disaster management specialists at the local, national, and regional levels.

- In FY 2021, USAID/BHA provided more than \$28.5 million to partner organizations conducting early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) activities in eleven countries across South and Central Asia.
- In Bangladesh, USAID/BHA provided \$6.2 million in FY 2021 funding to two non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to continue implementing multi-year food security activities designed to build resilience among vulnerable populations by supporting agriculture, livelihoods, and maternal and child health, as well as women’s economic empowerment initiatives.

**USAID/BHA ER4 FUNDING FOR SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA IN FY 2021**

Standalone ER4	\$15,050,000
Integrated ER4	\$13,459,543

**Total: \$28,509,543**

- Across South Asia, USAID/BHA continues to support resilience and preparedness through the Program for the Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER), which promotes disaster preparedness through professional development activities and training for emergency responders in the region. The program also partners with local governments’ National Disaster Management Offices to support disaster risk reduction, early recovery, and emergency response policies and strategies.
- To mitigate risks associated with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, USAID/BHA partners across the region have increased virtual engagement and adapted programs to promote social distancing and mitigate the risk of disease transmission, while continuing to provide critical assistance to at-risk communities. In Afghanistan, USAID/BHA partners also expanded ER4 activities to include critical messaging on COVID-19 transmission risks and prevention behaviors for health actors, as well as vulnerable communities, across the country.

*In South and Central Asia in FY 2021, USAID/BHA supported standalone and integrated ER4 activities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.*

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### *Strengthening Emergency Preparedness and Risk Management for Central Asia Red Crescent Societies*

USAID/BHA provided a total of \$1.1 million in FY 2021 funding to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to strengthen local capacities to mitigate the effects of earthquakes and other natural disasters among vulnerable populations in Central Asia. IFRC administered ER4 training—covering topics such as adapting to climate-related risks and emergency preparedness—to community volunteers and national Red Crescent Society staff in five Central Asian countries to support early action and emergency preparedness, as well as to improve coordination among government agencies for emergency response. USAID/BHA also supported the distribution of first aid kits, stretchers, and other basic response equipment for national Red Crescent societies in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, strengthening their capacity to provide urgent assistance to individuals in need. Furthermore, with USAID/BHA funds, UNICEF bolstered emergency preparedness and response programming for children and young people, enhancing youth and community participation in disaster response planning and resilience activities, as well as expanding protection services in line with the strategic priorities of the governments of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. These efforts leveraged existing emergency preparedness and risk reduction tools, as well as collaborations with national and local governments developed through ongoing USAID/BHA-funded activities.

### *Supporting Preparedness, Response, and Resilience in South Asia through PEER*

Since 1998, USAID has funded PEER to promote disaster preparedness through professional development activities for emergency responders across South Asia in partnership with the American Red Cross (AmCross), the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), and the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET). In FY 2021, as part of USAID/BHA-supported PEER activities, NSET continued its critical work to support local communities, as well as municipal, national, and regional disaster management authorities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic’s disruption of in-person training opportunities, NSET staff rapidly developed online community disaster response, hospital preparedness, and medical first responder refresher courses to continue supporting disaster management professionals and strengthen local capacities to respond to sudden-onset emergencies.

During the fiscal year, ADPC continued to support countries in South Asia to further integrate PEER’s approach and activities into national and sub-national emergency response budgets and programs, in line with country disaster management strategies. ADPC worked to engage additional stakeholders; continued training responders in first aid and search-and-rescue best practices; and developed linkages between national, regional, and global disaster risk reduction frameworks. Since 2013, ADPC has also supported additional capacity-building activities to help emergency responders in Bangladesh meet heightened needs following natural disasters through another USAID/BHA-supported program, Strengthening Earthquake Resilience in Bangladesh.

### *BHA Partnerships Promote Response Capacity and Preparedness Across South Asia*

To promote resilience and preparedness across South Asia, USAID/BHA has partnered with a variety of U.S. Government partners, including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Using the Incident Command System (ICS)—a standardized, multi-hazard response management mechanism—USFS is assisting disaster management professionals across the region to integrate ICS strategies into disaster response mechanisms, supporting their ability to respond to sudden-onset emergencies. Meanwhile, USGS is providing technical assistance to local and government disaster management specialists in Nepal and Sri Lanka to establish protocols for emergency landslide and earthquake response. Additionally, in partnership with USAID/BHA, NOAA technical assistance is supporting national meteorological and hydrological services and disaster management agencies to improve impact-based forecasting, which informs the operations of emergency responders and government officials.

### *Bolstering Food Security and Resilience Through Multi-Sector Support in Bangladesh*

Since 2015, USAID/BHA has partnered with CARE and World Vision to implement two multi-year Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs) in Bangladesh that promote improved agricultural production, food security, disaster risk reduction, livelihood security, and maternal and child health outcomes in multiple regions throughout the country.

In FY 2021, USAID/BHA provided \$3.2 million to CARE to conclude multi-year food security, nutrition, and resilience-building activities among vulnerable communities in northern and northeastern Bangladesh through the Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) III program. During the fiscal year, CARE reached approximately 28,000 households with agriculture and livelihoods trainings through the program. Additionally, SHOUHARDO III worked closely with the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System—an intergovernmental institution that develops multi-hazard frameworks for disaster early warning systems and provides capacity-building support for disaster response—to enhance community resilience against extreme hazard events and maximize agricultural benefits from favorable weather conditions by employing adaptive weather forecasting techniques. CARE also provided support to pregnant and lactating women, children ages five years and younger, and adolescent girls through health systems strengthening, including telemedicine services, expanded private health services in hard-to-reach areas, and improved collaboration among government and non-government actors.

In addition, USAID/BHA provided \$3 million to World Vision in FY 2021 to complete the multi-year *Nobo Jatra*, or “New Beginning,” program, which aimed to improve food security, nutrition, and community resilience against natural hazards in southwestern Bangladesh. World Vision reached more than 256,000 beneficiaries, including through cash assistance to pregnant and lactating women to purchase food and meet needs, as well as by providing basic health and nutrition services through community clinics. In addition, World Vision delivered technical support to smallholder farmers to expand crop yields, enhance local livelihoods, increase access to safe water, and facilitate public awareness campaigns to reduce incidents of forced marriage among adolescents and children. Through a separate USAID/BHA-funded program, World Vision is also working to increase communities’ access to disaster early warning systems, as well as to safe and accessible cyclone shelters. The strategic layering of these programs will maximize the positive effects of *Nobo Jatra* programming, as well as foster resilience through inclusive and sustainable community disaster response mechanisms.



Two participants in the USAID/BHA-funded *Nobo Jatra* program feed their children. Photo credit: World Vision.

### *Bolstering Community-Led ER4 Efforts in Bangladesh*

Bangladesh is highly prone to natural disasters—such as cyclones, flash foods, and other hazards—which often result in damaged or destroyed houses, degraded environmental resources, and reduced livelihood opportunities, compounding existing needs among low-income households. To reduce the disaster risks facing vulnerable communities, USAID/BHA partners Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and CARE are working to strengthen resilience to such hazards. With \$1 million in FY 2021 funds, CARE is working in northern Bangladesh to improve community resilience to natural hazards by conducting flood-resilient improvements to housing and other community infrastructure, assisting communities in the development of risk reduction action plans following risk assessments, and building the capacity of community volunteers to adequately prepare communities for and respond to disasters. Meanwhile, with prior year USAID/BHA funding, CRS continues to strengthen the capacity of local disaster management structures and develop community-led disaster risk

reduction plans that mitigate the impacts of natural hazards among at-risk populations in Bangladesh's Bandarban District. In addition, CRS rehabilitated local infrastructure through cash-for-work projects that bolster regional resilience, providing temporary employment opportunities to host communities affected by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who arrived from Burma since 2017.

### *Enhancing Nepal's Disaster Risk Management Capacity*

Communities in western Nepal's Karnali River Basin face numerous challenges, including limited access to nutritious and affordable food or adequate and appropriate water resources, as well as concurrent and recurrent natural disasters. Moreover, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have further undermined the food security and wellbeing of many households, particularly the most vulnerable, including female-headed and low-income households. In response, during FY 2021, USAID/BHA supported Mercy Corps with \$2 million to address the emergency food assistance needs of vulnerable households in Karnali, while also working to augment future food security and build resilience to sudden-onset shocks. Through the program, Mercy Corps provided nearly 118,000 people with digital cash cards to support individuals in meeting their immediate needs. Simultaneously, Mercy Corps engaged community groups to lead core activities such as disaster risk reduction planning and the adoption of sustainable agricultural and water management practices, enabling populations to mitigate disaster risks more effectively and build food security resilience.

### *Augmenting Information Management and Public Awareness for Disaster Preparedness in Afghanistan*

USAID/BHA provided more than \$1.3 million in FY 2021 to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to conduct disaster risk management activities in areas of Afghanistan susceptible to droughts, landslides, and other recurrent natural disasters. In partnership with community members and local leaders, IOM supported community-, district-, and provincial-level authorities to prepare hazard maps and vulnerability assessments that identify and provide targeted support to at-risk communities. The UN agency also organized an advocacy campaign to broaden public awareness of hazard risk mitigation measures. Separately, in FY 2021, a USAID/BHA NGO partner continued to work with humanitarian organizations and local community leaders to strengthen local preparedness structures by developing technical tools and additional information resources that outline potential natural hazards in the region. The NGO also provided monitoring services and training on information management to enhance nationwide coordination and information sharing with the objective of improving disaster preparedness and increasing the effectiveness of emergency response operations.

### *Building Resilience in Afghanistan Through Integrated Emergency Response*

In FY 2021, USAID/BHA continued to support eight NGO partners working to provide health, nutrition, protection, WASH, and a range of other integrated emergency services to support disaster- and conflict-affected Afghan households. Additionally, to mitigate the health risks associated with continuing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, NGO partners adjusted programs to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Partners delivered key messages on COVID-19 prevention to community-based emergency response teams, building their capacity to disseminate health information throughout their respective communities and track suspected cases of COVID-19.

### *Strengthening Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning in Sri Lanka*

With prior year USAID/BHA funding, the Sri Lankan NGO Sarvodaya continued its work with community leaders, grassroots activists, and other stakeholders to develop localized disaster response and mitigation strategies for 60 vulnerable communities in disaster-prone areas across the country in FY 2021. The program works to bolster community resilience and improve disaster response coordination between local organizations and international relief actors, aiming to reach approximately 250,000 individuals through community-led disaster mitigation activities, disaster management trainings, and public awareness campaigns. Separately, USAID/BHA partner World Vision also works in Sri Lanka to increase local leadership in disaster risk reduction

efforts by collaborating with local emergency management authorities and bolstering Village Disaster Management Committees' ability to communicate disaster response plans, emergency early warnings, and response coordination efforts. The NGO partner is also working with local organizations to strengthen livelihood resilience among the most-vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka by delivering targeted agricultural training and inputs which facilitate households' transition towards utilizing climate-adaptive methods of production.

### *Localizing Disaster Risk, Recovery, and Resilience Efforts in Pakistan*

In FY 2021, USAID/BHA partners continued to support NGOs in Pakistan to strengthen vulnerable communities' ability to prepare for and mitigate the negative effects of natural disasters. During the fiscal year, USAID/BHA provided \$1 million to ACTED and \$2 million to WFP to help disaster-affected communities residing in drought- and flood-prone provinces strengthen livelihoods by distributing conditional cash transfers which build resilience to future shocks by increasing households' ability to afford basic goods. ACTED also worked with local authorities to strengthen disaster response systems and institutionalize response best practices. Additionally, USAID/BHA supported Concern International to deliver targeted grants to local partners with the access, capacity, and knowledge required to meet the needs of host communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees in Pakistan. The program also distributed relief commodities to affected individuals following natural disasters, facilitated humanitarian coordination and information management efforts, and provided economic recovery and agricultural assistance to Pakistani returnees to bolster their food security and livelihoods.

#### **USAID/BHA ER4 ASSISTANCE FOR SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA IN FY 2021<sup>1</sup>**

<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING PARTNER</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Standalone ER4</b>			
Central Asia Regional	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice (DRRPP)	IFRC	\$550,000
	DRRPP	UNICEF	\$550,000
South Asia Regional	Natural Hazards and Technological Risks	NOAA	\$200,000
Bangladesh	RFSA	CARE	\$3,200,000
	RFSA	World Vision	\$3,000,000
	Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)	Hellen Keller International (HKI)	\$250,000
	DRRPP, Shelter and Settlements	CARE	\$1,000,000
India	DRRPP	The Asia Foundation	\$350,000
Nepal	Agriculture and Food Security	Mercy Corps	\$2,000,000
	Natural Hazards and Technological Risks	USGS	\$200,000
Pakistan	Economic Recovery and Market Systems (ERMS), MPCA	ACTED	\$1,000,000
	MPCA	UN World Food Program (WFP)	\$2,000,000

Sri Lanka	DRRPP	WFP	\$600,000
	Natural Hazards and Technological Risks	USGS	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL STANDALONE ER4 FUNDING</b>			<b>\$15,050,000</b>
<b>Integrated ER4 With Response<sup>2</sup></b>			
Afghanistan	DRRPP	IFRC	\$133,560
	DRRPP, Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)	IOM	\$1,325,983
Bangladesh	DRRPP, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	CARE	\$2,000,000
	DRRPP, HCIMA	WFP	\$10,000,000
<b>TOTAL INTEGRATED ER4 WITH RESPONSE FUNDING</b>			<b>\$13,459,543</b>
<b>TOTAL ER4 FUNDING IN FY 2021</b>			<b>\$28,509,543</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 30, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Integrated ER4 with Response refers to programming that incorporates ER4 components within an active humanitarian response.

## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)