

The Bay of Bengal

With long, low-lying coastal areas, dense populations, and high levels of poverty, the Bay of Bengal is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions. The people in our specific areas of focus—the delta areas of Orissa, West Bengal, and Bangladesh—face cyclones, storm surge, flooding, heat waves, erratic rainfall, and sea level rise—all projected to become more frequent and intense. These challenges combine to produce extensive salinization of both soil and water, with serious implications for farming livelihoods, food security, and water access. Already, the situation is forcing many farmers in the region to leave their land; with one meter of sea level rise, tens of millions of people could become “climate migrants.”ⁱ



In this context, CJRF is supporting four adaptation objectives:

Sustaining Rural Development:

Critical development needs in the Bay of Bengal's changing climate include: access to freshwater, technologies for farming saline soil, and new sources of income and nutrition. We fund scalable community-driven solutions that benefit women, landless laborers and fisherfolk.

Building Equitable Resilience Systems:

As Bay of Bengal residents face more floods, storms, and short-term livelihood failures, they rely more and more on what we call “resilience systems” – the physical protection (embankments, mangroves, water infrastructure), social safety nets, and planning processes that help communities contend with calamity. We support advocacy and movement building to shape these systems and ensure they deliver for those most in need.

Migration That Works for Families:

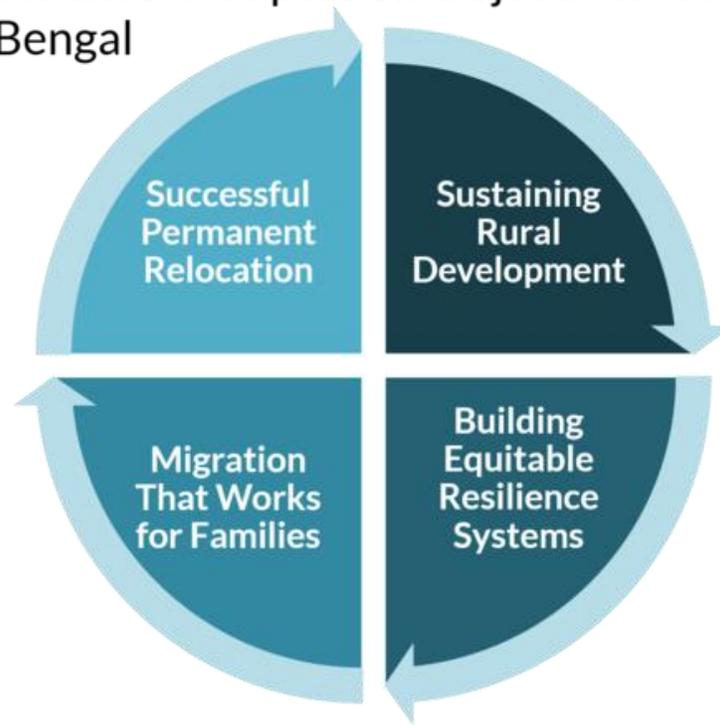
Short-term and partial-household moves can help build resilience when migrants find good jobs and safe living situations. Money sent back home can help families regain more solid footing. Our grants explore emerging patterns of movement in the region, identify success factors, and address gender-related migration challenges and opportunities.

Successful Permanent Relocation:

Where sea level rise, storm surge, and erosion have already combined to make some places unlivable, some people are making permanent moves. As time passes, more parts of the Bay

of Bengal region likely will face similar circumstances. We support communities, families, and individuals to build assets and capabilities that can help them thrive in a new location if a move becomes necessary. This includes youth training, leadership development, and community-driven, rights-based planned relocation pilots.

A Continuum of Adaptation Objectives for the Bay of Bengal



In parts of this region, relocation may be inevitable in the long run. But adaptation and resilience-building can help families avoid forced migration and enable them to move on their own terms. Whether people stay or go, empowerment, security, dignity, and self-determination are the foundation of a more promising future.

ⁱ Megan Darby. "What will become of Bangladesh's climate migrants?" Climate Home News. August 14, 2017.