Kunming–Montreal
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

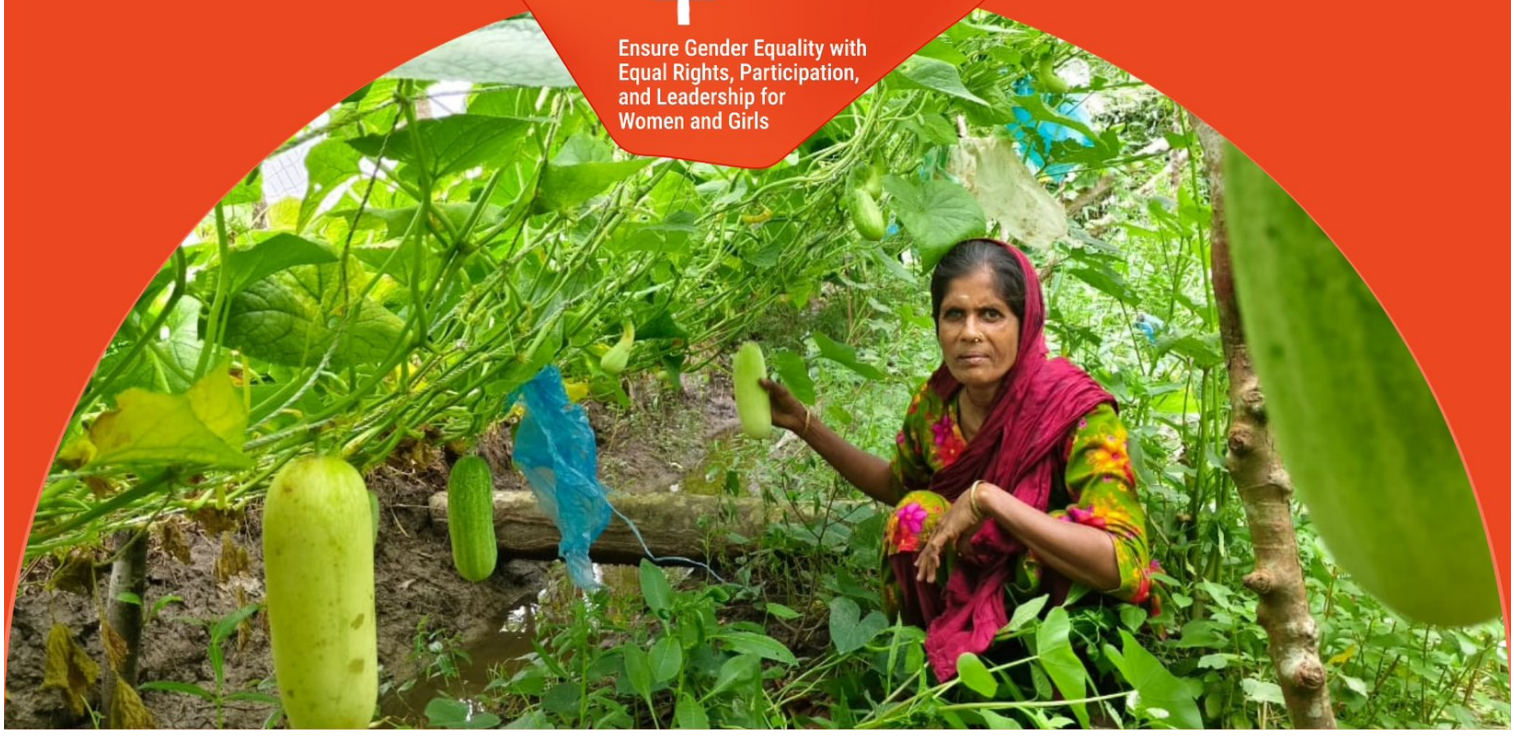
Convention on
Biological Diversity

WOMEN-LED FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FOR BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND FOOD SECURITY

Example of Target 23 in Action

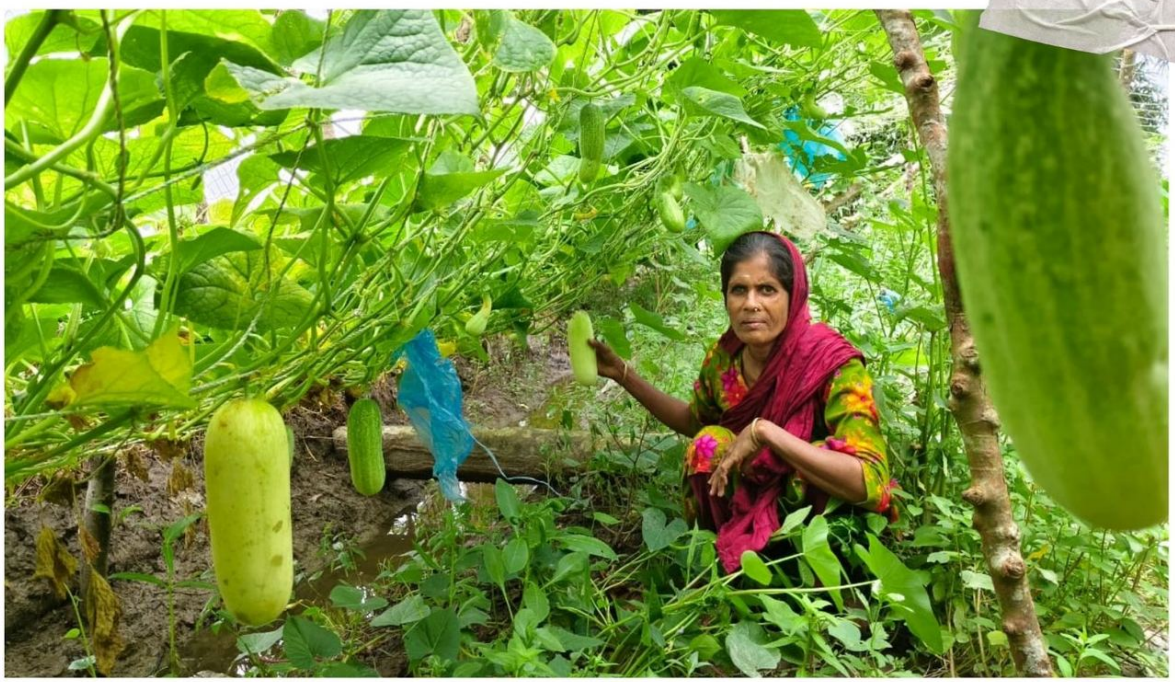
23

Ensure Gender Equality with Equal Rights, Participation, and Leadership for Women and Girls



When Environmental Pressures Deepen Inequality

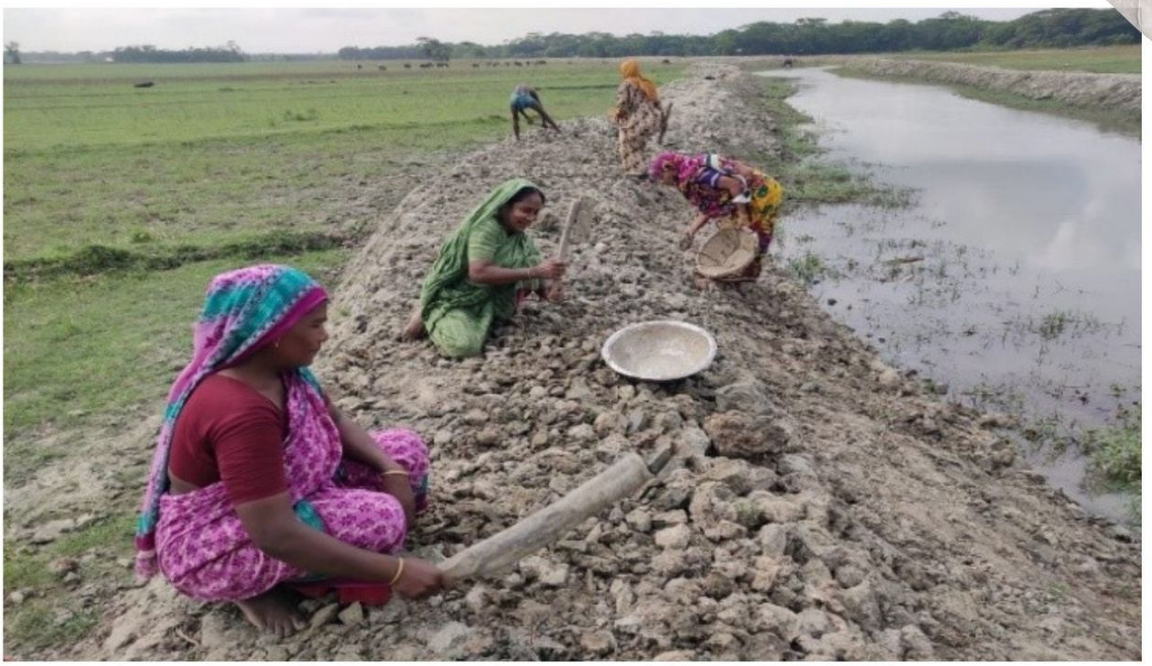
Women in coastal communities of Bangladesh **face some of the harshest climate impacts**, particularly salinity intrusion and fresh water scarcity, as they are **primarily responsible for food production**, water collection, and household nutrition.



(Photo Credit: JAGO NARI)

These pressures threaten soil quality, local agro-biodiversity, and food security, with **disproportionate impacts on women** from poor and climate-vulnerable households.

Under the PRODRIPTA Project, implemented by JAGO NARI, a **nature-based solution** was applied through the **excavation and restoration of three freshwater canals** in the Rangabali and Kalapara sub-districts of Patuakhali.

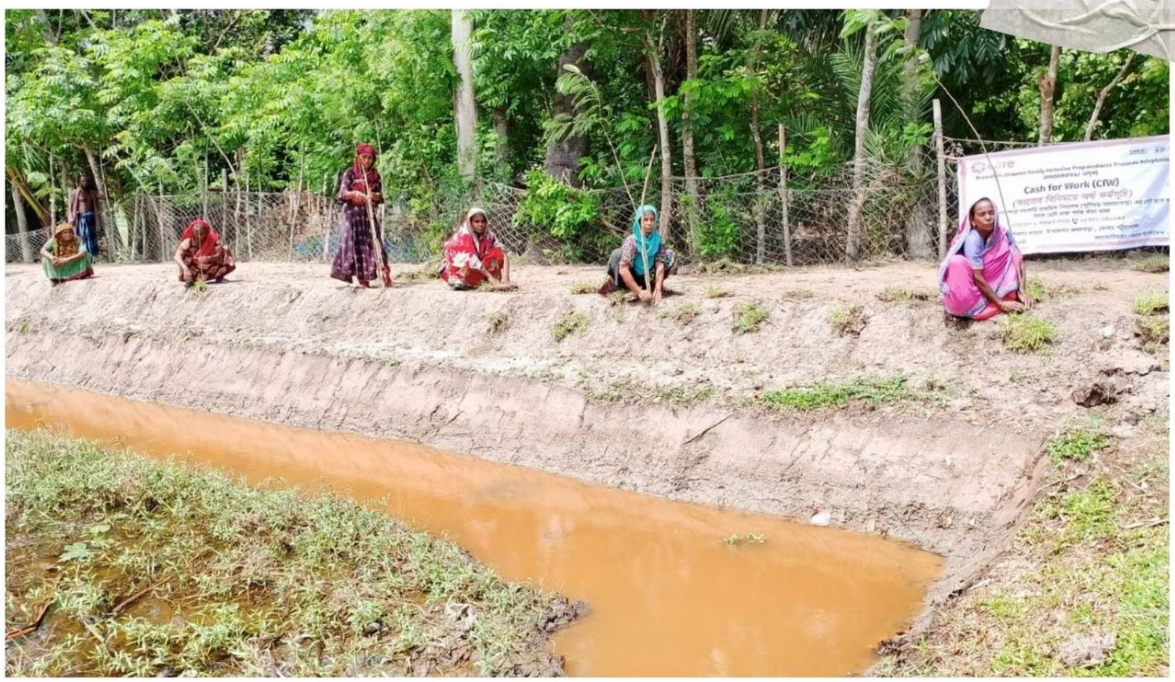


Women excavating a canal to restore freshwater access and protect livelihoods (Photo Credit: JAGO NARI)

This intervention restored natural water flows and fresh water storage capacity.

Women from poor and climate-vulnerable households were **prioritized as paid workers** during the construction process.

This placed women at the center of ecosystem restoration, rather than in passive roles.

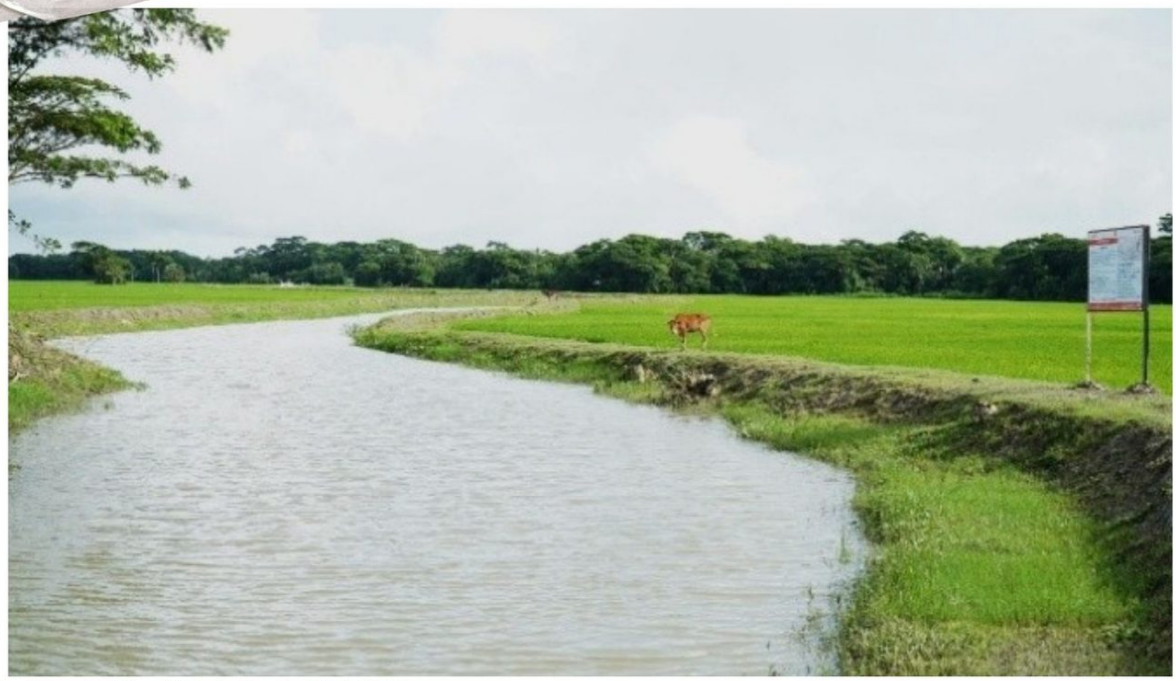


Women excavating a canal to restore freshwater access and protect livelihoods (Photo Credit: JAGO NARI)

The income generated through the project **strengthened women's economic agency** and decision-making capacity, while reducing reliance on harmful coping strategies.

Rebuilding soil biodiversity and agro-biodiversity.

The canal excavation reduced saline intrusion and restored year-round fresh water availability, **helping freshwater ecosystems recover** while improving soil conditions for irrigation, livestock, and everyday use.



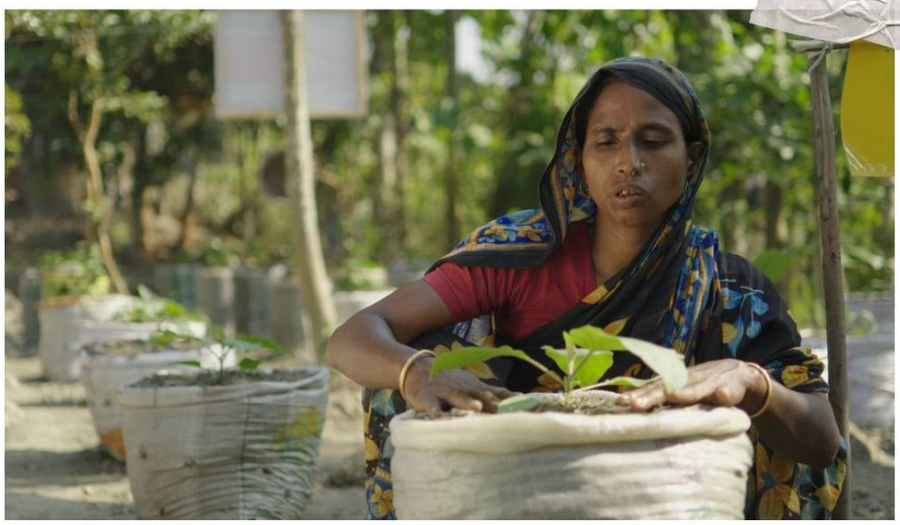
The Excavated Canal (Photo Credit: JAGO NARI)

As a result, surrounding agricultural lands regained productivity, supported **diverse crop cultivation**, and reduced pressure on underground water resources.

Restoring ecosystems is only the first step.

Community members continue to protect the canals by collectively managing water flows and preventing saline intrusion during the dry season.

Sustained through collective action



(Photo Credit: JAGO NARI)

Tree planting along canal banks has stabilised soil, reduced erosion, and strengthened climate resilience

benefiting over 1000 households

through long-term stewardship of restored ecosystems.

What does this mean for biodiversity?

The project provided training on **climate-adaptive agriculture**, promoted saline-tolerant crop varieties, and introduced **sustainable practices** such as vermicompost fertilizer.

These practices improved soil health, increased crop diversity, and **supported environmentally sustainable food production systems**, delivering tangible benefits for soil biodiversity and agro-biodiversity.

(Photo Credit: JAGO NARI)

What does this mean for women?

Improved access to fresh water has allowed women to practice diversified, year-round cultivation, contributing to an estimated **minimum economic benefit of BDT 23,000 per household** through:

- **increased agricultural productivity**
- **reduced input costs**
- **crop diversification**
- **reduced reproductive labor burdens**

This experience demonstrates that when

women are empowered through conservation measures

both biodiversity outcomes and community resilience are strengthened.

Contributed by:
JAGO NARI

In collaboration with:
CBD Women's Caucus