

# ASIA REGIONAL WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

FAIR SHARING OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Nepal

Bhutan

Bangladesh

India

BRAHMAPUTRA GANGES MEGHNA (GBM) RIVER BASIN

650 MILLION POPULATION

Bay of Bengal



**PROGRAM BASINS** 



# ASIA REGIONAL WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAMS

EMPOWERING RIVERINE COMMUNITIES ACROSS ASIA TO REALIZE THEIR WATER RIGHTS FOR SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO CONVENE A WIDE RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS: COMMUNITIES, NETWORKS, GOVERNMENTS, PRIVATE SECTOR, ACADEMIA AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE MORE INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE WATER GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

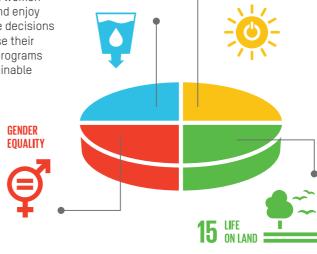
- The Oxfam Water Governance team in Asia has over 15 years' experience of working on the fair sharing of natural resources and benefits. We work in the Mekong, Salween, Ganges and Brahmaputra and Meghna river basins.
- Oxfam is present in these basins where millions of people have limited and insecure access to water and are exposed to water-induced natural hazards such as droughts and floods.
- We work with governments, civil society, river networks, researchers, academics, developers and the private sector, youth and indigenous groups with a special focus on gender.

- We promote networking and knowledge sharing by bringing communities and partners together within and across borders and linking communities to sub-regional, regional and international institutions so their collective voices are heard.
- Our portfolio of projects includes supporting communities to understand and protect their fisheries, promoting women champions, supporting pilots for alternative energy options and transboundary early warning systems.

FOR US, GOVERNANCE MEANS WHO IS INVOLVED; WHO IS EXCLUDED; WHO BENEFITS AND WHO LOSES WHEN DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RIVER BASIN RESOURCES IN ASIA. MOST OFTEN, IT IS THE POOR, MARGINALIZED, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY WOMEN WHO ARE THE MOST NEGATIVELY IMPACTED.

#### SDGS ENGAGEMENT

Our overall aim is an inclusive, sustainable and resilient Asia where men and women are valued and treated equally and enjoy their rights, where they influence decisions that affect their lives and exercise their responsibilities as citizens. Our programs contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION

AFFORDABLE AND

#### THE CHALLENGES IN ASIA

The CHALLENGES for Asia: Asia is changing rapidly driven by demographic shifts, changing geo-politics, increased investment and trade with a focus on financing for infrastructure and rapid urbanization. Asia is a new global economic centre with the increasing importance of the private sector in the development sphere. This is leading to challenges for civil society.

Development is built on large scale resource extraction resulting in the deterioration of the natural environment. What happens upstream impacts on those living downstream. Rivers connect nations and provide the means for trade but also the potential for nationalism and conflict as resources become reduced. The lower lands in each basin have extensive floodplains, wetlands and delta systems that are critically significant ecosystems with a rich biodiversity that, once lost, can never be replaced. Oxfam is concerned for the communities in the river basins who stand to gain the least and lose the most -their

land and livelihoods- as they are excluded from any development decision making. Their rights are being denied, and the increasing threats to food security: depletion of fish, reduction in land and access to water for rice cultivation threatens the economic progress and benefits that could be made for all.

Asia is one of the most climate and disaster-prone regions. Natural disasters caused more than \$48 billion worth of agricultural damage in 2017 (FAO, 2018). Flood-induced loss and damage in South Asia can cost \$215 billion a year by 2030. The severity and frequency of many such climate-related hazards is on the rise resulting in large scale economic, environmental and social disruptions across Asia. For example, the devastating South Asia floods of 2017 affected more than 40 million people across Nepal, India and Bangladesh. Riverine communities in the GBM basins were the worst affected.



#### WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

OUR APPROACH

#### BUILD CAPACITY



strengthen the capacity of river basin leaders, communities and networks to engage with, and influence public and private policy decision makers. We pay particular attention to building the participatory and leadership skills of women and youth.

### **BUILD AN EVIDENCE BASE**



We bring academic research together with local knowledge to build an evidence base to inform and influence water governance policies and practices to make them more inclusive and equiatble.

#### **PROMOTE NATIONAL** AND INTERNATIONAL **POLICY STANDARDS AND SAFEGUARDS**

and hold infrastructure developers to account including how communities are consulted over water and natural resource management.

#### IS TO: **STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES AND**



we strengthen community-based natural resource management and alternative energy options suited to local community needs and leverage this evidence into national and international energy policy discussions.

#### **HOW TO COLLABORATE WITH US?**

WE ARE PLEASED TO WORK WITH YOU, SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE, **RESOURCES AND NETWORKS.** 

#### **PLEASE CONTACT US**



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#### AND VISIT US



https://asia.oxfam.org/what-we-do/ mekong-water-governance







@oxfamwatergovernance @RiversTROSA





## **HOW WE WORK:**

Building on our long-established presence in each country, the Regional Water Governance Programs are networked across Asia. Our team is multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary. We ensure program quality and financial stewardship through Oxfam systems and we promote innovation through regional learning and communications.