BUILDING CAPACITY FOR FLOOD AND WATER RESCUE BANGLADESH FIRE SERVICE AND CIVIL DEFENCE

Every year, at least 20% of Bangladesh floods. The RNLI is working with the Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence (BFSCD) to develop the country’s ability to respond to large-scale floods safely and effectively.

Why are we doing this?
The climate and topography of Bangladesh mean that large areas of the country are regularly affected by flooding, which impacts the lives of hundreds of thousands of people every year. The country also experiences a range of extreme weather, including monsoon rains and tropical cyclones. Both of these lead to large-scale flooding across the country.

The Bangladesh government has given the BFSCD responsibility for managing the response to these natural disasters. However, a lack of operational structure and training within the BFSCD has limited their capacity to respond to the regular, large-scale floods and other water-rescue-related incidents.

What do we want to achieve?
• Provide safe and effective flood response, to save more lives from drowning during floods in high-risk areas of Bangladesh. In turn, this will give BFSCD greater capability to deal with in-water rescue situations unrelated to flooding.
• Communities are more resilient to flooding as they are more aware of the risks associated with floodwater, and understand how to manage them as they go about their daily lives.
• High-level relationships and partnerships are developed in order to roll out flood rescue services and community awareness programmes on a large scale. The worst affected areas are targeted, which in turn reduces drowning risks.
• The BFSCD are able to provide flood rescue services in high-risk areas themselves, with limited support and guidance from the RNLI.

How are we doing it?
Since 2013 the RNLI has been working with BFSCD to develop a range of flood and rescue interventions. More fire service personnel are now trained to carry out rescues during floods. The BFSCD now has a number of trainer-assessors who can train others in floodwater rescue. The BFSCD is rolling out trained operational flood rescue teams in high-risk areas and developing operating procedures for their flood and water rescue services.