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The low-lying coastal zone of Bangladesh, with its wide open sky, is a beautiful land, although it has always been vulnerable to tropical storms.

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But now the climate is changing. The sea is rising. And as storm surges reach further inland, the salt content of both soil and river water is increasing.

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Fresh water fish are now unable to survive. Traditional crops have become difficult to grow.

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But thanks to the support of our church partners in Bangladesh, the women of this coastal region are now playing a critical role in enabling their communities to prepare for the climate changes they face.

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Self help groups like this one are playing a vital role, training the women to create more sustainable livelihoods, and to build more resilient village networks.

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These women have set up a small micro-credit scheme, which they oversee together.

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And thanks to a loan from this fund, Gyatree Mondal has been able to set up a crab farm.

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Her hard work and success in setting up this sustainable small business venture has given her confidence, and has given her a leadership role among her neighbours.

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But she is not the only one. Right across the coastal zone, self help groups are growing, and women are taking the lead in building a new economic viability into their village communities, in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

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Another such woman is Momata Bala. She and her husband, Uttam Kumar Bala, will never forget Cyclone Aida, which devastated their coastal zone in 2009.

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Six years later, however, they are well on their way to building a more sustainable future for their daughter, who is now in school. They are creating new livelihoods for themselves, and alternative sources of income which they hope will be more resilient in the face of changing weather patterns.

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Uttam Kumar Bala is proud of the community leader his wife has become, and is proud of what her skills have enabled them to do together. I trust her entirely, he says.

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The emphasis of the World Development Appeal is on local people helping themselves, but access to training and support can make all the difference. Your giving will enable organisations like Bangladesh Nazarene Mission to support some of the world's poorest people in building a way out of poverty and into a life of dignity and greater freedom.