



Tapati with her daughter Tunpa, (right) and her niece

connect2: Bangladesh

Sharing lives across the world

It's a busy morning in Pobitra's tea shop in Kainmari village, southern Bangladesh. Hot steam fills the small cluttered space that is filled with people sitting at wooden tables, sharing their morning news. Pobitra, who stands behind a tiny counter by the window, reaches over and grabs a kettle from the stove before pouring steaming hot tea into two glass cups. But two days before cyclone Aila hit in May 2009, it was a very different place.

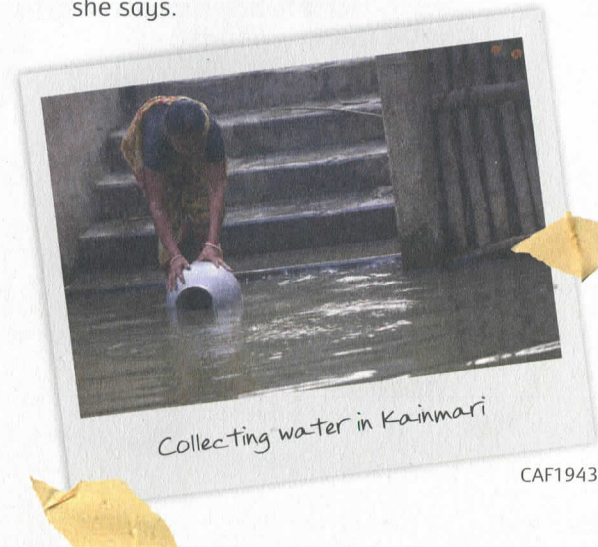


Above: Pobitra and his wife, Mollika
Left: Sabita

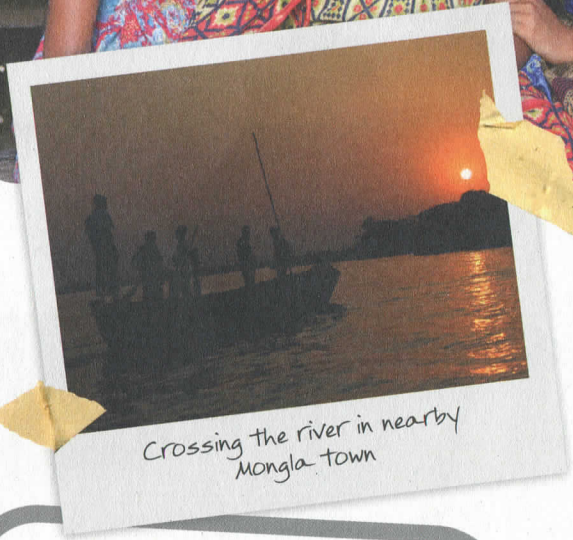
"When we heard a cyclone was coming, everyone from the warning group crowded into my tea shop to hear the latest bulletin on the radio," he explains. "Then I raised the warning flag outside the shop and one of us used a megaphone to warn people more widely."

Used to dealing with disaster, the people of Kainmari have an early warning system for when cyclones are about to hit. They have organised themselves into groups that do everything from helping people to evacuate to providing first aid.

At the centre of this is 45-year-old Sabita, who helped to set up the emergency groups. "I lost everything when cyclone Sidr hit in 2007," says Sabita. "It was a horrible night for all of us. I was soaked to the skin and had mud all over me."



Collecting water in Kainmari



Crossing the river in nearby Mongla town



Profulla

"I think people's dreams should be endless. I have endless dreams."

Profulla Sarker, 56, who owns a grocery shop in Kainmari.

A special invitation

The people of Kainmari invite you to learn more about their lives. Extend a hand of friendship and solidarity and hear from local people including Pobitra and Sabita as they work to care for their families and create a better life.

Making the difference in Kainmari

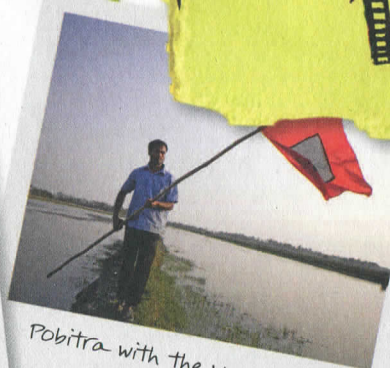
- All 250 families living in Kainmari are at risk from natural disasters that are happening more frequently, such as cyclones and floods
- The unpredictability of the climate means that people can no longer rely on traditional ways of making a living, like growing rice, and must adapt to find other ways of earning an income
- The density of the population in Bangladesh, changes in climate, and difficulties that people face in making a living, mean that a lot of people may be forced to move to other areas

The people of Kainmari believe they can adapt to their environment and create a secure and prosperous future with the help of CAFOD and our Catholic partner, Caritas Bangladesh. With your help, the people of Kainmari will:

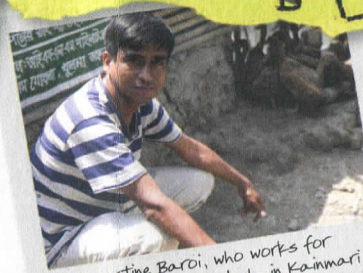
1. **Learn** which varieties of rice, vegetables and fruit grow well in local soil and how to preserve them for future use.
2. **Learn** how to grow crops, vegetables and fruit in soil that has been affected by sea water to eat and sell.
3. **Attend** group sessions run by Caritas Bangladesh about how to react during a disaster and reduce the impact of disasters and the change in climate.



Washing dishes in the river



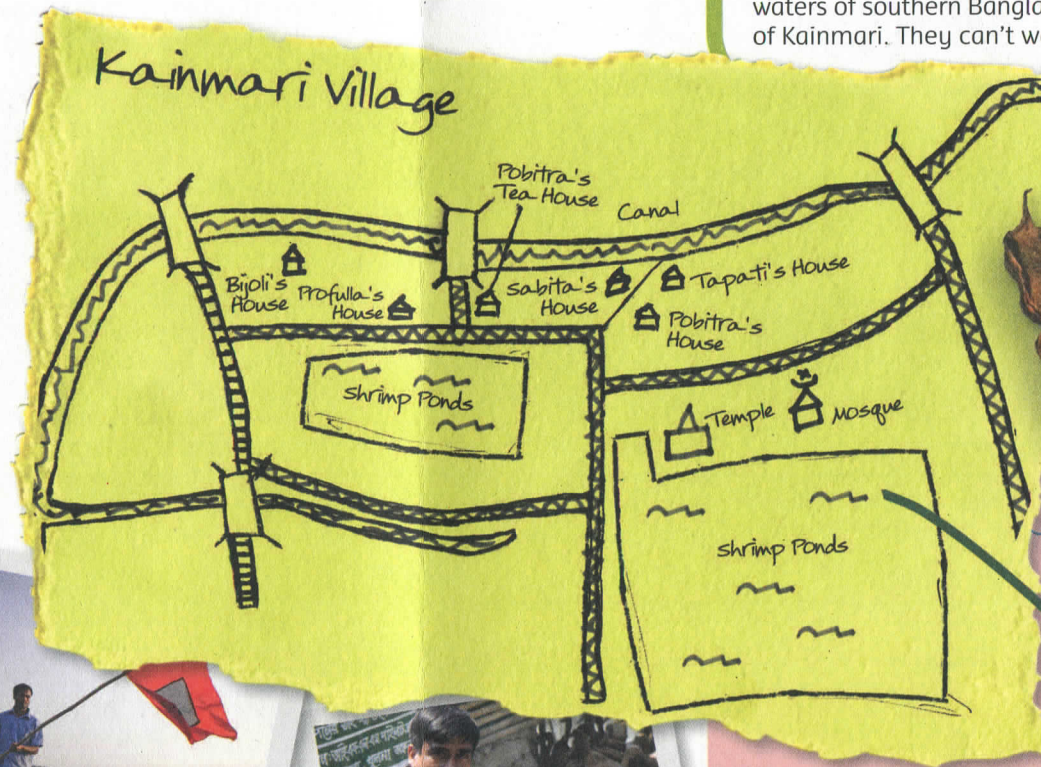
Pobitra with the warning flag



Augustine Baroi, who works for Caritas Bangladesh, in Kainmari

"In the light of Catholic social teaching there should be no poor, no hunger, no injustice. I work by these gospel values. It's the dignity of the human that's important."

Augustine Boroi, Caritas Bangladesh



Bangladesh: the shimmering reality

What do you know about Bangladesh? You will probably know that thousands of Bengalis now live in the UK and have made a huge contribution to our economy. And that Bangladeshi curry has become one of the UK's favourite foods! But did you know that the Sundarbans in southern Bangladesh, which is home to the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger, is the largest single block of mangrove forest in the world? Or that the country is home to 160 million people, which means it has a larger population than Russia, despite being 120 times smaller?

But what is everyday life like for ordinary people in Bangladesh? We invite you to cross the river, hop on a bicycle rickshaw and take a journey through the shimmering waters of southern Bangladesh to meet the energetic people of Kainmari. They can't wait to hear from you!

Left: Dried tamarind seed pods from Kainmari

