



# Regional Infrastructure Monitoring Alliance (RIMA)

**Conference 2025 REPORT**

**05-07 October 2025**  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Organized by**

**Regional Infrastructure Monitoring Alliance (RIMA)**

**Hosted by**

**Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN)**

# Globalization, Infrastructure Investment and Due Diligence



**Regional Infrastructure Monitoring Alliance (RIMA)** is an independent, informal platform that follows anti-colonial, democratic, gender-sensitive principles. Our credibility and independence are our core strengths. Rima's objectives are to expose safeguarding violations and banks' policy and governance shortcomings. We collect evidence in the form of case studies which we use to push banks to improve their safeguards and policies. In doing so, we amplify regional voices and confront the responsible shareholders, institutional actors, and governments.

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## MOTTO

To enable local communities to fight for sustainable infrastructure that respects the SDGs, mitigates climate change, and meets environmental standards, RIMA strengthens the voices of local communities and pushes for accountability of economic actors.

## OUTPUTS

- Mapping of all case studies/hotspot analysis collected so far from the region
- Long-term network for the empowerment of local groups
- Joint development of advocacy strategies for the protection of livelihoods, climate and biodiversity
- Policy briefings on coal, oil and gas infrastructure
- Training material in English, Bengali, Hindi and other local languages

## Participants

Civil society, think tanks, academics, decision-makers, and representatives from countries in the region aiming at future energy transition. The meeting is aimed primarily at umbrella organisations and multipliers.

## Thematic Areas

- **Day 1:** Looking back and ahead: Local campaigns and needs, Stocktaking: Investments into the region
- **Day 2:** Campaign Learnings, tools and power mapping: Best practices and future strategies
- **Day 3:** Continue coordinated strategy, RIMA governance and future.

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## Day 1 | 5 October 2025 | Sunday Local campaigns and needs and Investments into the region

### Welcome

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 9:00 AM-9:15 AM



Image: Hasan Mehedi, CLEAN, Syeda Rizwana Hasan & the RIMA Steering Committee (Dr. Nora Sausmikat & Vidya Dinker)

Host of RIMA 2025 Hasan Mehedi denoted that we are all accountable for determining our destiny. He noted that RIMA was launched in order to contribute to a sustainable future. Dr. Nora Sausmikat and Vidya Dinker emphasized the changed geopolitical landscape by the current “trade war” between China and the US, and on a worldwide scale. They expressed their optimism that working together on the same platform RIMA will foster a positive and productive environment.

### Inauguration

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 9:15 AM-9:45 AM

#### **Syeda Rizwana Hasan**

Honourable Adviser, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEFCC), Bangladesh

In her inaugural speech, Syeda Rizwana Hasan said that investment without debate, safeguards, and public consent risks harming both people and the environment. A good investment is one that protects nature, respects people’s voices, and strengthens long-term resilience. She added that agencies like Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) should not sacrifice national safeguards for quick approvals. Development must respect environmental laws, ensure transparency, and uphold land rights. She also called for urgent reforms in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process that needs openness and accountability. She highlighted that Bangladesh stands at a crossroad, and development must prioritise people.



## Introduction: Background of RIMA

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 9:45 AM-11:15 AM



### **Dr. Nora Sausmikat & Vidya Dinker**

RIMA SC, Campaigns on multilateral financial institutions, Urgewald  
RIMA SC, CEO, Growthwatch

Dr. Nora Sausmikat explained the background and objectives of RIMA. RIMA started as an informal alliance of civil society groups from East, South and Southeast Asia as well as from Europe. Meanwhile, the network spread also to other parts of the world. The idea to form such a network evolved out of the global simultaneous reaction to the inauguration of China's Belt and Road initiative, and was driven by the communities from the Global South. Infrastructure projects funded by the Chinese government and multilateral development banks (MDBs) often affect biodiversity, livelihoods, and human rights. RIMA wants to improve transparency and accountability mechanisms for such projects. RIMA monitors Chinese investments, fosters communication between Asian CSOs and affected people, and develops tools such as the [living document](#) on helpful advocacy tools for RIMA purposes, safeguard rankings and monitoring systems. Additionally, it emphasizes human rights litigation, advocacy, cooperation, and capacity building. In general, RIMA wants to create a rights-based network that guarantees the sustainability, equity, and accountability of infrastructure projects connected to China and IFIs. Vidya Dinker expressed the hope that this year RIMA will be further collectivized so that it runs with a robust but flexible structure. Hence, she urged that all participants of the RIMA 2025 Conference commit their full support and energy to ensure the success of the conference and the growth of the network.

## **The Story of Bangladesh: Chinese investments changing the country**

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 11:15 AM-11:45 AM

### **Hasan Mehedi**

Chief Executive, Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action  
Network (CLEAN)

China and Bangladesh have been allies for 50 years. 673 Chinese companies currently operate in Bangladesh. China has contributed significantly to Bangladesh's infrastructure development through large-scale projects such as the Payra and Patuakhali power plants. China-financed projects are entirely loan-based, only allow Chinese contractors, and frequently source 70–80% of their goods and services from China. This restricts local employment and industrial benefits in contrast to projects funded by OECD nations or multilateral development banks. Additionally, there is no competitive bidding process in place for China-funded projects. Organisations like CLEAN and



CSO network such as Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Debt (BWGED) have repeatedly urged Chinese officials, including the President, Prime Minister, MOFA, MOFCOM and financial institutions to take action, but received no response. Interestingly, China is the largest funder of renewable energy, accounting for around 70% of total financing.

## The Power of Finance Campaigning: Stopping China's Fossil Expansion

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 11:45 AM-12:15 PM

### Nicole Rath

Urgewald

Nicole examined the critical role of finance in driving the global fossil fuel industry and its implications for the climate crisis. Despite widespread awareness of climate change, many fossil fuel companies continue to expand. Nearly 628 out of 1,579 coal companies are building new mines, plants, or related infrastructure, and 1,336 out of 1,370 oil and gas companies have expansion plans. Chinese financial institutions and state-owned enterprises play a central role in supporting this growth, providing substantial funding to coal projects globally, including US\$ 1,302 million for PowerChina and US\$ 503 million for China Energy Engineering Corporation. The presentation questions whether coal expansion outside China can truly be curtailed while Chinese finance continues to drive new projects. She emphasizes the urgent need for targeted campaigning and financial accountability to stop the proliferation of fossil fuels and align global energy development with climate goals.



## Sharing experience and stocktaking: Local campaigns

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 13:30 PM-15:15 PM



### Noor Muhammed

CEO, Centre for Social Innovation and Foreign Policy (CESIF)

## **Pakistan: Thar Coal Campaign**

Noor Muhammed shares the insights of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that has resulted in major coal mining and power-generating projects in Pakistan's Tharparkar Desert. Under CPEC, USD 4.5 – 5 billion has been invested in mines and power plants generating ≈ 2,640 MW. The area is home to nearly 2 million marginalized people. While these projects offer national energy security, they have serious local consequences. Communities suffer groundwater depletion, pollution, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and health crises, including rising respiratory illnesses and child mortality. The Thar Citizen Forum (TCF), a grassroots group advocating for environmental justice, openness, and a just energy shift to renewables, emerged in the face of poor rehabilitation and a lack of accountability. It documents impacts through participatory research, amplifies community voices, and pushes for fair compensation and independent monitoring to protect both people and ecosystems in Thar.

### **Ali Akbar & Rahmad Syukur**

Chief of Executive Board, Kanopi Hijau & Director, Apel Green Aceh

## **Indonesia: Coal/dirty energy/Chinese investment**

In Aceh and other Indonesian districts, coal mining and power facilities with a capacity of 35 GW have been financed by two significant Chinese banks. The project causes substantial environmental harm, including air and water pollution, coastal erosion, and damage to farming and mangrove ecosystems. It has led to social unrest, abuses of indigenous and community rights, and health issues such as respiratory disorders and a rise in paediatric ailments. They emphasised their organisations' efforts to raise awareness through community activism, provide legal aid, and submit reports to environmental and human rights mechanisms. They also highlighted persistent issues, including a dearth of studies on the effects on health and gender, difficulty reaching isolated populations, and a lack of openness from the administration. Despite these hurdles, both organisations continue to strengthen local movements, improve communication, and advocate for justice and a transition away from dirty energy toward community-centred renewable solutions.

### **Danila Bekturganov**

Director, Civil Expertise

## **Kazakhstan: Chinese involvement in Extractives**

Chinese companies account for approximately 40% of Kazakhstan's 90 million tonnes of annual oil and gas production and for about 15% of the mining sector. However, the challenges, such as environmental problems, water pollution, labour rights violations, and conflicts with local Indigenous communities, are not unique to Chinese companies. These same issues are present with other international corporate Institutions. The core issue civil society faces is the lack of strong advocacy. This is due to structural weakness within countries of the Global South, including Kazakhstan. Danila Bekturganov explained that advocacy only succeeds when a particular minister or official takes a personal interest. However, if that person is replaced, all previous efforts are lost. Due to the absence of a strong institutional framework, advocacy depends heavily on personal interests, rendering any progress fragile and temporary. He proposed a solution using the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a UN human rights mechanism, as a means to develop stronger and more resilient advocacy efforts.



## **Manasha Jayasinghe & Janaka Withanage**

Legal Officer/ Policy and Advocacy Campaign Officer Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ)

### **Sri Lanka: Chinese Investment in Sri Lanka**

Janaka Withanage explained Sri Lanka's current political and economic situation. Following a period of corruption, a new government is in place and the economy is growing slowly. He highlighted Sri Lanka's geopolitical importance, which attracts interest from India, the USA, and China, making it a strategic location. Mr. Janaka then focused on a new wave of Chinese investments planned for 2024-2025. He cited several projects, including a \$3.7 billion oil refinery in Hambantota, "smart classroom" projects, and other investments in renewable energy. He stated that around 1,080 Chinese investment companies are now involved in the country and framed this within the context of Sri Lanka's external debt, providing a breakdown by creditor: commercial creditors (35.5%), multilateral lenders (35.2%), bilateral ex-China (15.9%), and China bilateral (13.4%).



Manasha Jayasinghe took over to discuss the primary legal challenges. She stated that the "major issue" with these large-scale projects is land acquisition.

While Sri Lanka has a judiciary, projects are not going through the proper legal system. The central problem is the use of long-term 99-year leases for these projects. This is a big issue, as it raises concerns about national sovereignty. Ms. Jayasinghe concluded that while Sri Lanka needs development, it must also protect human rights and ensure the country is not "broken" by these agreements.



## **Vijay Kant Karna**

Chairperson, Centre for Social Innovation and Foreign Policy (CESIF)

### **Nepal: Geo-politics and Chinese investment in Nepal**

Vijay Kant Karna analysed Chinese engagement in Nepal alongside the nation's recent political crisis. He identified the security of Tibet as China's primary driver, noting that BRI projects are stalled over financing disputes as Nepal seeks grants over loans. Mr. Karna highlighted severe governance failures in existing projects, citing the Pokhara Airport as a key example of corruption, opacity, and a system in which low-bidding Chinese firms inflate costs through delays, often backed by diplomatic pressure. He linked this systemic corruption to a recent, youth-led uprising driven by anger at decades of "punitive loot" by political leaders. While students bravely initiated the protests, the movement was ultimately hijacked by miscreants, leading to widespread arson, 76 deaths, and the destruction of key government buildings. This crisis resulted in an interim government led by a former Chief of Justice, with new elections anticipated soon.



**Greeshma Kuthar**  
Independent Journalist

### India: Warming up to China

Greeshma Kuthar based her presentation on her investigation into India's Act East (formerly Look East) policy. She argued that India's relationship with China is undergoing a significant, overlooked transformation from a security-based rivalry to a pragmatic, transactional alliance.



Based on her investigation into India's "Act East" policy, she reported that key infrastructure projects, such as the Trilateral Highway and Kaladan Project, are corrupt, incomplete, and meaningless to local populations. She used Myanmar as a primary example, noting that India, much like China, is now a major military supplier to the Junta, abandoning its previous pro-democracy stance to protect geopolitical projects. She identified a fundamental ideological reversal within India's ruling establishment. She stated that the RSS, historically anti-China, is now pushing for pragmatic engagement based on trade and massive resource extraction in the Northeast, prioritising the Stilwell Road (connecting India to China).

Ms Greeshma concluded that this pivot from a security to a trade-focused narrative reveals how easily public opinion is managed. She warned that as India and China converge as transactional and majoritarian powers, their alliance will be devastating for their neighbours and border populations.

### **Reflection on Major Learnings: "Bandhuder Adda"**

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 15:40 PM-16:20 PM

During the tea break, participants were asked to reflect on all the presentations shared and identify 3 learnings each. Participants were divided into 7 groups (groups of friends, "Bondhuder Adda" in Bangla), and their key findings were recorded and voted upon.



The key themes emerging were:

**Domestic Corruption as the Primary Enabler of Harmful Projects:** The highest-voted finding (10 votes, from Adda 1) was that "Corrupt governments make it easier for China to gain entry" due to weak accountability and transparency mechanisms. This was a widely shared sentiment, echoed by Adda 2+6, which noted "local governments are door openers for China coming in" and Adda 4, which identified "corruption in national and local governments" as the key factor.

**Failure and Inadequacy of International Mechanisms:** An equally top-voted finding (10 votes, from Adda 3) expressed an "Urgent need for systemic changes at the UN," which the

group described as "defunct, weak, and having no legal power". This reflected a deep scepticism about the efficacy of current global governance institutions.

**Universal Negative Impacts and Lack of Safeguards:** A strong consensus emerged (8 votes, from Adda 7) that communities across all regions face "Similar adverse impacts," most notably "No consultation, lack of transparency and debt trap". The same group's finding of a "Notable lack of safeguards, grievance and complaint mechanisms for Chinese investments" (7 votes) was identified as a critical "possible point for advocacy".

**A Call for New Civil Society Strategies:** The groups concluded that civil society itself must adapt. There was a strong call for "stronger connections & strategies" and for "let's break the silos" (Adda 3). Echoing a presentation from Kazakhstan, one group noted that "Personalities exist in NGO's / civil society also and changes are needed" (Adda 3), calling for a move away from personality-driven work and toward building resilient, coordinated efforts.

**Table 1: Insights from “BONDHUDER ADDA”**

Name	Points	Number
ADD A 1	1. Corrupt governments make it easier for China to gain entry into countries because they don't have strong accountability + transparency mechanisms or laws.	10
	2. The government easily changes policies or makes new laws to facilitate in Indonesia esp. for minerals + coals and considers activists as enemies.	1
	3. National economical self interests has led Countries to align with China regionally + globally that has become entry points for Chinese investment	2
	4. We have the same problems + struggles even if our perspectives + approaches differ nationally. We need a coordinated effort to counter these harmful influences.	2
ADD A 3	1. We agree with our brother from Kazakhstan. but want to add "personalities exist in NGO's / civil society also and changes are needed"	2
	2. There is an urgent need for systemic changes at the UN. (defunct, weak, no legal power), no action only speeches & statements, UN led by the larger majority world	10
	3. Stronger connections & strategies to be used by our groups and against the military industrial complex that is controlling the world let's break the silos.	2
ADD A 4	1. Aspirations of the communities, building alignment is a challenge	0
	2. Communities not getting benefits from the projects	0
	3. How to make china money accountable, when it's attractive?	0
	4. China offers easier terns than World bank and ADB	0
	5. Corruption in national and local gov't's leads to opening up to chinese money	2
ADD A 05	1. Lack of transparency across countries can be owed to corruption that seems to be prevented as a practice in all the presentations that we saw.	1
	2. Chinese Capitalism > (More powerful) state governments China interests in .	0
	3. Discussion around investments is always focused on the end goal which is made to sum all flashy/glittery emphasis on internal processes and what is lost in	1

	the process is barely moves highlighted (especially for civil society to understand and critique)	
ADDA (2+6)	1. Differences between countries: - different influence of China - provide technology - develop projects	0
	2. Commonalities - energy & infrastructure projects along BRI - China as largest funder of renewable - Human rights violations - local governments are door openers for China coming in - Change after revolutions in Bangladesh Nepal?	5
	3. Campaigning - UPRs: good strategy BUT - only every 4 years - China doesn't accept standards in UN system	1
ADDA 7	1. Communities facing different issues but with similar adverse impacts , E.g. No consultation, lack of transparency, DEBT trap	8
	2. Reason for investment seems to be political related to Geopolitics	8
	3. Notable lack of safe guards , grievance and complaint mechanics for chinese investments (possible point for advocacy)	7



## Closing the Day and Outlook for Next Day

5 October 2025 | Sunday | 16:20 PM-17:00 PM

### Mr. Vidura Prabhath Munasinghe

Senior Researcher, Law & Society Trust, Sri Lanka

Mr. Vidura Munasinghe synthesized the day's discussions, noting that while the focus initially centred on Chinese-funded fossil fuels, the sessions revealed an impending global shift toward renewable energy. He cautioned that China is also poised to lead this green transition, but there is a significant risk that this new phase will merely replicate the past failures. The recurring theme of the day was the persistent use of a top-down development model. This excludes local and vulnerable communities, burdening them with loans for projects that provide no direct benefit. He argued that in this new phase, CSOs must fundamentally reimagine development. He issued a call to action for a new vision built from the bottom, with communities defining their own needs. He concluded by challenging the traditional role of civil society. He argued that simply pushing governments is not effective, as it allows activists to be dismissed for always protesting without offering alternatives. The new, essential role for CSOs, he proposed, is to build the capacity to lead a substantive discussion and proactively define what an equitable and sustainable development model should be.



## Day 2 | 6 October 2025 | Monday Campaign learnings, tools and power mapping: Best practices and future strategies

### Leo Lou

Accountability Council

### Accountability mechanism capacity building for Chinese institutions (CCCMC)

In a recorded presentation, Leo Lou outlined the decade-long effort by civil society to establish grievance mechanisms for communities harmed by Chinese overseas investments, particularly under the Belt and Road Initiative. She contrasted the lack of such mechanisms with the established accountability offices at traditional Multilateral Development Banks. Ms. Lou detailed a two-pronged strategy: engaging the CCCMC (China's metals and minerals chamber) and the NRA, China's financial regulator. A promising 2018-19 initiative to create a national-level mechanism under the NRA ultimately "did not pan out" due to a lack of political will. The current strategy, therefore, focuses on making a direct "business case" to the financial institutions themselves. This advocacy argues that grievance mechanisms are not a burden but an early warning system for risks, a good governance tool for monitoring investments, and a requirement for compliance with China's Green Finance Guidelines.



She explained that they use data to debunk common myths, showing that unresolved community conflicts are far more costly—leading to project delays and "double-digit" profit losses—than the minimal cost of running a mechanism. Ms. Lou concluded that despite this advocacy, no effective grievance channel currently exists, which makes the parallel work with bodies like the CCCMC "all the more important."

### **Yun Lai (online)**

Senior China Advisor, Global Witness

### **How to engage and dialogue with Chinese mining companies? (CCCMC)**

Yun Lai presented Global Witness's strategy for engaging Chinese overseas investments, particularly in the transitional mineral and mining sector. He characterised the sector as a complex mix of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and private companies, noting that while some are willing to improve, many lack the foundational understanding of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles. He identified several key challenges, including the fact that Chinese companies often lack the confidence to communicate directly with NGOs and local communities, and that very few Chinese NGOs work on sensitive topics related to overseas investment, especially if it involves the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, he pointed to a critical opportunity: most companies are very concerned about scandals and the risk of sanctions. This creates a powerful leverage point, as companies seeking to access the EU market must follow the OECD guidelines, pushing them to accept audits and implement higher standards.



Given this situation, Mr. Lai outlined Global Witness's three main strategies:

1. **Share Knowledge and Increase Dialogue:** The first priority is to share solid evidence and case studies from field investigations in host countries directly with Chinese ministries to improve their understanding of community-level issues.
2. **Use International Standards as Leverage:** Global Witness uses the market-driven need for companies to follow OECD guidelines for EU market access as a practical tool to push for better standards.
3. **Promote a Mediation Consultation Mechanism:** This platform, developed with a Chinese partner (CCCMC), is the cornerstone of their engagement. It is not a formal grievance mechanism but rather a problem-solving platform for dialogue and communication. Its function is to set up the platform and bring all stakeholders together for bilateral dialogue, fact-finding, and mediation. The primary challenge remains building trust with both companies, which are often wary of international organisations and local communities.

The Q&A session revealed critical practical realities. Mr. Lai explained that Global Witness had proactively approached the Chinese embassy in Zimbabwe. After the embassy confirmed its independence, it was very receptive and facilitated a direct and active dialogue with two major Chinese mining companies. When asked if the mediation consultation mechanism is being used, Mr. Lai was candid: it is not used very well or widely, mainly because CCCMC lacks the staff to run it. However, he concluded with a strategic call to action, stating that if more CSOs apply pressure by submitting cases, CCCMC will be forced to dedicate more resources to making this vital dialogue platform functional.

## Zhong Huang

Senior Researcher, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) and  
**Dr. Nora Sausmikat (Urgewald)**

### Overview on Chinese stakeholders

**Dr. Nora Sausmikat (Urgewald):** Nora Sausmikat began the session by focusing on the key financial institutions, which are the root of many of the projects discussed. She first explained the Policy Banks, which are crucial for implementing China's overall development strategy. She highlighted the China Development Bank (CDB), also known as the BRI Bank, which is the largest policy Bank in the world (bigger than the World Bank) with assets of around \$3 trillion. She also mentioned the China



Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank), the world's largest export credit agency, which finances exports by Chinese companies. She then moved to state-owned Commercial Banks, focusing on ICBC as the largest. Because the Chinese government owns 66% of ICBC, it is obliged to fulfil certain regulations. Ms. Sausmikat pointed out that these regulations and the bank's own principles, like its roadmap to gradually exit coal financing and its membership in the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure, can be used as pressure points. However, she shared the example of the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). Despite a global concerted action and letter-writing campaign, ICBC didn't reply, demonstrating the gap between its stated policies and actions.

Finally, Ms. Sausmikat explained the complex and changing regulatory structure for these banks. She explained that in 2023, the system was reorganized, putting them directly under the party. The former regulator (the CBIRC) was replaced by a new more powerful body to regulate banks, the National Administration of Financial Regulation (NAFR). This new body is now the main entry point for advocacy. She noted that the old regulator did pass Green Finance Guidelines in 2022, which required banks to install a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), and this remains a key entry point for campaigners.

**Zhong Huang (BHRRC):** Zhong Huang began by introducing the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC), a global knowledge hub established in 2002 that tracks the human rights impacts of over 10,000 companies. She then addressed the effectiveness of evolving ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) regulations. Ms. Huang categorized Chinese companies, ranging from large State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to illicit individuals, noting that publicly listed companies are the most willing to engage.

She highlighted supply chain mapping as a critical strategy. Even if local Chinese operators are unresponsive, the "middle string" of smelters and buyers includes responsive international brands (such as CATL, Samsung, and LG), creating effective pressure points. She gave the powerful example of Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt, a Chinese company in the middle supply chain, whose response rate to BHRRC is 100%. She concluded by tying these ideas into a comprehensive strategy.

Her core message was that campaigners should not target a Chinese company in isolation but must incorporate China into their overall strategy. This comprehensive "web of pressure" involves linking the project on the ground to:

1. **Domestic Lawsuits**
2. **International Buyers and Financiers**

### 3. **Global Mechanisms**, such as the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

By creating this bigger picture, civil society makes it much harder for both the company and the state to ignore. The Q&A and discussion focused on practical strategies for engaging with Chinese companies. It was established that public-facing companies are more likely to respond not out of goodwill, but due to international pressure from buyers and reputational concerns, underscoring the importance of mapping corporate financial and banking relationships. Regarding grievance mechanisms, speakers reported mixed results; In contrast, UN mechanisms were found to be unresponsive and direct company engagement was complicated. National Human Rights Commissions were cited as the most realistic and effective channel for securing a response. The panel concluded that holding companies accountable ultimately depends on the host country's willingness and power to enforce its own laws, and it was suggested to combine existing efforts rather than create new regional mechanisms. Finally, attendees were alerted to a new international mediation system for financial disputes emerging in Hong Kong and were advised to review their national investment treaties.

## **New avenues for advocacy: International Court of Justice (ICJ)**

6 October 2025 | Monday | 10:20 AM-10:50 AM

### **Abdul Mufeez Shaheed**

Campaigner, Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC)

Abdul Mufeez Shaheed of PISFCC discussed the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion as a new avenue for climate advocacy. He emphasized that the court has not created a new law but has clarified existing legal obligations. Shaheed highlighted several key clarifications from the court:



1. **1.5°C Target:** The Paris Agreement's 1.5-degree target is now interpreted as a legal threshold for state conduct, not merely as political aspiration.
2. **Progressive NDCs:** Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must be progressive. This means countries are legally obligated to not go backward on their commitments, a clarification Mr. Shaheed noted opens the door for new litigation based on NDCs.
3. **State Obligations to Regulate:** The court affirmed that States have a clear obligation to regulate corporations—including parent companies—to prevent environmental and transboundary harm, holding them accountable for their subsidiaries' actions in the Global South.
4. **Loss and Damage:** The opinion substantially strengthens the legal basis for Loss and Damage, establishing that if a state breaches international law on climate change, it has an obligation to provide a remedy.

He concluded by proposing a new advocacy strategy: instead of only targeting foreign institutions, activists should pressure their own governments to block harmful investments, thereby tackling both the "demand and supply" of such projects.

He then laid out a strategic roadmap. The immediate step is to translate the complex advisory opinion into accessible, actionable language for civil society. The ultimate goal is to transform the opinion into a legally binding law through a Vanuatu-led UN General Assembly resolution, a move which already has high-level political support.

## Sharing on Experiences of Different Campaigns in Indonesia and Bangladesh

6 October 2025 | Monday | 11:20 AM-12:05 PM



This session featured five panellists from Indonesia and Bangladesh who shared the key focus, challenges, and strategies of their respective environmental and human rights campaigns. These focused on 3 questions: 1) What's your campaign all about? 2) Do you think you can win your campaign? 3) What are your major learnings, and where do you need support from this group to succeed?

- **Nukila Evanty:** Chairperson/Executive Director, Inisiasi Masyarakat Adat (IMA)
- **Dewi Hairani:** Program Manager, Yayasan Srikandi Lestari
- **Riski Saputra:** Senior Researcher, Aksi Ekologi & Emansipasi Rakyat (AEER)
- **Tauhedul Islam Shahazada,** Executive Director, Prantojon
- **Bareesh Hasan Chowdhury,** Campaigns and Policy Coordinator, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)

**Tauhedul Islam Shahazada (Prantojon, Bangladesh):** Mr. Shahazada reported on campaigns in the Patuakhali district, a hub for Chinese-invested mega-projects such as the Payra seaport. He stated that the primary issues are the forced displacement of local communities, inadequate compensation, and companies' failure to provide promised rehabilitation. A unique strategy his organisation employed was to give women who lost their land alternative livelihoods with solar energy, such as solar-powered sewing machines, incubators, and water pumps.

**Riski Saputra (AEER, Indonesia):** Mr. Saputra discussed his organisation's campaign on Indonesia's nickel mining industry. He highlighted their strategy of following the entire value chain, linking the mines (and their associated human rights issues) to end users such as BMW in Germany. He noted that legal processes are complicated, especially when investments are solely Chinese and not tied to Western markets. A key innovative strategy was mapping pressure points in other jurisdictions; their campaign in Taiwan successfully leveraged the Taiwanese parliament to halt a project, demonstrating the effectiveness of transnational pressure.

**Bareesh Hasan Chowdhury (BELA, Bangladesh):** Mr. Chowdhury explained that BELA fights against the expansion of fossil fuels at the policy level, opposing government master

plans (such as the Power Sector Master Plans) that favour LNG and coal. A primary effective strategy has been transnational advocacy with civil society in funders' home countries. For example, his group provided on-the-ground information to Japanese colleagues, who then protested outside financiers (like JICA) in Japan against projects like the Matarbari coal plant. He also highlighted the power of engaging youth movements and using litigation to enforce existing laws, such as a successful case to ensure mandatory rooftop solar on new buildings in Dhaka is actually functional.

**Nukila Evanty (IMA, Indonesia):** Ms. Evanty focused on the campaign in the Rempang Islands, where a \$11.5 billion Chinese green energy mega-project threatens to relocate 7,500 Indigenous people forcibly. Her "aha moment" strategy was to engage the National Human Rights Institution, which she found approachable and helpful in generating official recommendations. She also employs an intersectionality approach, framing the campaign not just as an energy issue but by using Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators related to gender equality and clean energy to broaden its appeal. Her key success is that, through sustained community empowerment, Indigenous people remain and continue to resist.

**Dewi Hairani (Yayasan Srikandi Lestari, Indonesia):** Ms. Dewi shared the success of a campaign that led to a coal plant being added to the government's retirement list. Their most effective strategy was long-term capacity-building for the community, especially for women. They trained locals in public speaking and empowerment. This cultivated a woman champion—a single mother who lost her farm to pollution—who became a powerful national campaigner. This grassroots empowerment was combined with research, documenting 15 deaths and 3,500 lung disease cases, which was amplified by national journalists.

## Campaign Learnings with Chinese-led MDB AIIB

6 October 2025 | Monday | 13:30 PM-14:00 PM

### Petra Kjell Wright

Interim Programme Director, Recourse

Petra Kjell Wright provided an overview of Recourse's campaigning efforts focused on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). She began by outlining the 10-year old bank's structure. While China is the largest shareholder, followed by India and Russia, European countries hold almost a quarter of the votes. The US and Japan are not members.

Wright explained that Recourse targets the AIIB due to its controversial nature. A central problem is that although it is the only MDB established after the Paris Agreement, it has made significant investments in fossil gas and other "false solutions". She elaborated on two key issues:

- **Accountability Gaps:** The bank uses fast-tracked, President-approved projects that bypass regular board scrutiny, creating opaque, unaccountable financing models that make it difficult to track funds.
- **Policy Influence:** the AIIB uses policy-based lending to influence governments, encouraging them to adapt their national priorities to the bank's agenda to secure funding.



Petra Kjell Wright explained their campaign strategy focuses on policy reviews, like the AIIB's accountability mechanism, and monitoring projects to track funds. Since influencing the bank's

management is difficult, they target shareholder governments, especially "progressive belts" like European countries and Australia. While methods include direct lobbying and filing cases, she emphasized that evidence-based research and case studies are their most effective advocacy tool.

She concluded by listing key wins to show this strategy works. Recourse helped secure robust language on financial intermediaries, contributed to the Hin Kong Gas power project in Thailand being dropped, and successfully pushed for an Energy Sector Strategy review. This review led to a coal exclusion and new restrictions on gas, proving that advocacy can successfully influence the institution's direction.

### **Mayang Guerrero Azurin**

Deputy Director for Campaigns, GAIA, Asia Pacific

Mayang Guerrero Azurin introduced GAIA as a global, grassroots network with 25 years of experience fighting waste incineration. She presented on Waste-to-Energy (WTE) projects, defining them as a false solution.

Ms. Azurin explained that it generates very little energy, especially with Asian waste, which is 50-70% wet waste and requires additional fuel to burn. She identified WTE as the most expensive technology. Furthermore, it emits 68% more greenhouse gases per unit of energy than a coal plant, primarily because it burns plastic, which is made of fossil fuels. Finally, she noted that it creates carbon lock-ins through 20-year contracts and burns sources of livelihood for waste pickers.

She linked this problem to China, noting that with 40% of China's own incinerators idle, the country is now exporting this technology, using the AIIB to mobilize finance. GAIA's regional campaign strategy focuses on absorbing the risk for silenced local communities, only pursuing legal action when partners are ready. Ms. Azurin then presented two comparative case studies.



**Case Study 1: AIIB & China Everbright (CEB):** The campaign's key challenge was a total lack of project information, including its location. With no data, the team used an AIIB online policy consultation to make noise and highlight CEB's history of environmental violations.

- **Result:** The strategy succeeded. In June 2024, the AIIB project was TERMINATED.
- **Key Lesson:** This victory was achieved without building local alliances, as the team never identified the specific affected communities.

**Case Study 2: WTE Smokey Mountain (Philippines):** This case detailed a brutal, ongoing campaign against a project riddled with corruption and backed by powerful IFIs, billionaires, and high-level politicians. The campaign faced harassment, forced evictions, and a splintered local community.

- **Result:** The primary "win" was not project cancellation but the fostering of unity among fragmented communities, leading to a formal local alliance.
- **Key Lesson:** This grassroots movement-building was a critical victory in itself, attracting new, powerful allies (including the church and political parties) and demonstrating the importance of building a unified, resilient local front.

## **Rebeka Sultana**

Executive Director, Onnochitra Foundation, Bangladesh

Rebeka Sultana shared a presentation focused on the Mymensingh Kewatkhali Bridge Project. She began by explaining the project's justification: Mymensingh is a fast-growing city divided by the Brahmaputra River, which creates a critical bottleneck. The new bridge is intended to address this long-standing mobility issue, improving connectivity for approximately 11 million people in the region and reducing travel time to Dhaka.

She then provided the technical specifications and funding sources. The project, contracted to China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) and Spectra Engineers, involves a 320-meter bridge and 6km of approach roads. The funding is primarily from the AIIB, which provided a USD 260 million loan and an additional USD 2.163 million grant for the initial design and social studies. She explained that it is a Category A project, meaning it has significant potential environmental and social impacts. While it promises positive impacts like a boost in regional trade and local employment, its primary negative impact is land acquisition, which affects households and has the potential to spark "social tension" over compensation.



A significant portion of her presentation focused on irregularities and risks. She highlighted a stark gap between citizens' expectations of faster travel and the reality of slow progress, compensation delays, and uncertainty. The most critical issue she raised was the project's timeline: as of September 2024, only 1.78% of the construction was complete, despite 27% of the schedule having already elapsed. This, combined with reported land acquisition irregularities, points to significant risks of budget overruns and procurement issues.

Finally, Ms. Sultana outlined the AIIB oversight priorities needed to address these issues. She stressed that the AIIB must ensure transparency in contracts, design changes, and expenditures. She called for fair and impartial land compensation and active stakeholder consultation. Ms. Sultana emphasized that this transparency and citizen participation are essential to mitigate the project's significant risks and bridge the gap between citizen expectations and the current reality.

## **Case studies: Yarlong Tsampo, Develop a local campaign**

6 October 2025 | Monday | 14:00 PM-15:30 PM

### **Stella Hong Zhang (Online)**

Assistant Professor at Indiana University, People's Map of Global China

Stella Hong Zhang provided a critical analysis of China's new, massive hydropower dam project on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet, highlighting its secrecy, high-level political backing, and the powerful economic interests driving it. Ms. Zhang began by expressing surprise at the project's emergence. She found no information in Chinese media and emphasized that, in strong contrast to the Three Gorges Project (which was preceded by public debates in the 1980s), the Yarlung Tsangpo dam had no debate, no public consultation, or anything similar.

She was then quite shocked when, in July 2025, the news broke that a highly publicised groundbreaking ceremony, attended by Premier Li Qiang, had already taken place and explained that this quite rare level of senior leadership signals the project's immense political significance. Ms. Zhang identified Tibet as the final frontier for China's hydropower companies, who have been lobbying very hard for this project. This push is now enabled by new infrastructure (highways and railways) and aligns with the state's political agenda to strengthen control over the region.

With China's economy slowing and its construction sector in trouble, this 1.2 trillion yuan investment has created a very powerful interest group. When the project was announced, the stock prices of the major SOEs involved (State Power Investment Corporation, Three Gorges Group, Power China, and State Grid). A new, high-profile central SOE, the China Yalong Development Company, has been established at a vice-ministerial level to lead the project.

Ms. Zhong is not hopeful that existing laws will be followed, as the project is set to be built inside the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon National Nature Reserve, an area designated by Chinese law as a strictly protected zone where such development is strictly prohibited. There has been no explanation from the government or companies on how they will bypass this law. She concluded that when a project has this much political and economic significance, there will be very little respect for existing environmental regulations, and the state is ready to bulldoze over the protected area.

### **Ebo Mili**

Chairperson, Northeast Human Rights, India

Mr. Ebo Mili detailed his work providing legal assistance to villagers protesting the 11,500-megawatt Siang indigenous dam project. He noted that concrete information on related upstream projects, such as China's 60,000-megawatt dam on the Yalong Zangbo (Yalun) River in Singapore, is difficult to obtain within India, highlighting a need for transnational information sharing.



The core of his report focused on the methods of state repression used against the anti-dam movement. He stated that authorities are actively trying to isolate the affected villagers by preventing activists and legal counsel from reaching them. This includes legal harassment, such as filing First Information Reports (FIRs) against protesting villagers and registering separate cases against Mr. Mili and other activists. Furthermore, authorities are denying entry by using the "Inner Line Permit" system to block support; Mr. Mili cited a recent case where a senior Supreme Court lawyer was denied a permit to enter Arunachal Pradesh and provide legal counsel. Mr. Mili characterized these actions as a deliberate strategy of isolation—by preventing "outsiders" from helping, the authorities aim to leave the villagers isolated, making the movement easier to "crush." He affirmed that the activists are addressing these measures through the legal system and concluded by appealing to the conference for assistance in highlighting the villagers' plight and supporting their legal battles within the Indian judicial system.

## Ayesha D'Souza

Women and Rivers Program Manager, International Rivers

Ayesha D'Souza focused on the origin of the Brahmaputra River and the Tibetan Plateau by showing a video from Tibetan environmental activists to ensure their crucial perspective was included. The video identified the Tibetan Plateau as the "Third Pole" and the "Water Tower of Asia," noting its glaciers and rivers are a critical water source for 1.4 billion people. The activists detailed a severe dual crisis: a climate crisis, with the plateau warming three times faster than the global average, and a state-led ecocide. This is primarily driven by China's plan to build a 60,000-megawatt mega-dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo (the upper stretch of the Brahmaputra). They reported that local communities who protest, such as those in Dege County, face severe repression, including mass arrests and communication blackouts. The activists called for an international moratorium on development and for downstream nations to form a multilateral forum. Ms. D'Souza then outlined a multi-level strategy for resistance.



- Locally: Indigenous groups lead protests despite military presence and legal harassment.
- Nationally: Activists engage independent media to bypass compromised mainstream outlets.
- Internationally, activists are filing reports with UN Special Rapporteurs and building global solidarity.

She concluded by highlighting positive, alternative strategies, including building downstream solidarity between communities in India and Bangladesh, and promoting community-owned renewable energy like micro-hydro and solar. The Q&A session clarified that the Indian Siang dam is a state-run NHPC project, not Chinese-funded. Ayesha D'Souza noted that stopping such "national security" projects is extremely difficult as they bypass regulations and dissent is crushed, highlighting immense physical risks such as the recent Teesta dam collapse. Ebo Mili added that activists protesting the dam are now being branded as "Chinese agents" and "anti-national," facing a high risk of being detained under India's National Security Act (NSA).

## Developing Future Campaign and Advocacy Plan: Group Work

6 October 2025 | Monday | 15:30 PM-17:00 PM



Participants were divided into 3 groups. Each group dealt with just 1 question. Each group had one leader/facilitator. **Carmina Flores Obanil**, led the discussion on "What are the challenges in doing advocacy with Chinese companies?" **Mr. Hassan Mehedi** discussed "Major challenges for advocacy on Chinese Financial Institutions," and **Prabhakaran Veerarasu** led the discussion on "Campaign strategies and best practices".

Participants were instructed to join one of the three groups voluntarily. Each group's findings were recorded on a poster. Participants would later vote for the poster they found most insightful (excluding their own group's work), with the results to be shared the following day. The session formally ended with a 4-minute video presentation by Noor Muhammed, CEO of the Centre for Social Innovation and Foreign Policy (CESIF).

**DAY 3 | 7 October 2025 | Tuesday**  
**Continue coordinated strategy, RIMA governance and future**

## Developing future Campaign and Advocacy Plan: Presentations of Group Work

7 October 2025 | Tuesday | 9:30 AM-11:00 AM

### **Group 1: What are the challenges in doing advocacy with Chinese companies?**

Carmina Flores Obanil presented ten key challenges. A foundational issue is the lack of transparency and grievance mechanisms, combined with limited access to information and regulatory oversight for companies. This opacity makes advocacy an extremely high-risk and sensitive task for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). The danger is significantly heightened because the projects are closely linked and backed by powerful politicians, elites, and law enforcement institutions such as the police and military, meaning advocates are often opposing their own government. Furthermore, the work is undermined by hostile narratives. Advocacy is often labelled as anti-development, and HRDs are sometimes red-tagged or considered communist. This is compounded by the project proponents' perceived lack of respect for local culture and religious beliefs. Legally and structurally, advocates face significant hurdles. There are often contradictions between national laws and the provisions in Chinese contracts. The companies themselves have ambiguous structures due to insufficient information, requiring specialised and expensive investigation. This structure highlights the critical need for sustained funding for long-term campaigns. Finally, a complex

new challenge has emerged where CSOs raising awareness about alternatives are labelled as Chinese agents, which creates deep distrust within the communities they aim to help.

The discussion that followed explored the motives behind these challenges. Nukiia Evanty added that labels like 'spy' or 'Antikasi' are also used in Indonesia. Bareesh Hasan Chowdhury proposed that the fundamental issue is the capital system and that China's primary motive is profit.

Carmina countered this argument, stating it is not just profit but also about power and political image. She used a Philippine hydro-power project as an example, where the China Exim Bank funded a project the World Bank had dropped. Carmina explained this as a power play, designed to secure a strategic, geopolitical asset.



## Group 2: Major Challenges for Advocacy on Chinese Financial Institutions

There is no proper system for information disclosure, and they don't even have a public list of funded projects. Much of the information is kept secret under the excuse of national security, allowing projects to bypass national laws and weaken existing safeguards.



These projects are driven by policy banks that are deeply tied to the Chinese state and the Communist Party, and the government-to-government deals often happen behind closed doors. Also, when a project is private, Chinese banks still demand a sovereign guarantee, especially for large infrastructure projects, putting the financial risk on the host country.

The most concerning issue is the complete absence of accountability or grievance mechanisms. Communities affected by these projects have nowhere to turn. It's like banging your head against a wall. And finally, there's a sense of bureaucratic superiority, an authoritarian attitude that leaves little room for dialogue, participation, or local empowerment. Therefore, these issues reveal a system that is opaque, unaccountable, and heavily centralized, making genuine public oversight nearly impossible.

Following the presentation, Mamun Mia affirmed that the lack of information and the personal risks for advocates are the main obstacles, noting that it is often hard even to identify whether a company is Chinese. Danila introduced the challenge of national debt laws, which create financial pressure that hinders advocacy against new loans. Another participant observed that downgrading standards is not unique to Chinese FIs, as the World Bank also does it. Vidya Dinker raised a key missing challenge: the lack of support from experts who understand China and its actors.

Hassan Mehedi agreed with Vidya Dinker's point. He then strongly reinforced Mamun's comment on company structures, describing a jungle of companies where hundreds of subsidiaries can be involved in a single project, making accountability impossible to trace.

### Group 3: Campaign Strategies and Best Practices

Group 3 discussed the partnerships and international solidarity, reaching out to the world community to enlist allies, resources, and strategic assistance. In addition, it establishes strategic political alliances with like-minded individuals from various political parties to increase its impact and present a unified face. They maintain a meaningful conversation with legislators and government representatives at the policy level to advocate for substantive legislative and regulatory reform. On the other hand, it will be a challenge to address injustices in court through multifaceted legal and direct action, while maintaining public pressure through rallies and demonstrations.



Additionally, strategically engage the mainstream media to influence the public narrative by planning field trips and press tours that allow reporters to observe the problems firsthand. Social media and citizen journalism will develop into effective instruments for documenting, informing, and inspiring. Furthermore, it creates chances for cross-community learning, allowing impacted groups to connect and exchange experiences. Put community members and bank representatives in direct contact through community-bank tours so they can learn about the real-world effects of these initiatives. Digital petition campaigns will enable anyone worldwide to express their opinions and publicly support our cause.

The work has to be community-led and inclusive of all people. In order to solve environmental issues, it prioritizes women, youth, and indigenous people, whose voices are most crucial. Also, treating these problems as questions of justice and public interest rather than merely technical ones is the aim. Using both local expertise and scientific research, we will continue to collaborate with politicians and gather compelling data to bolster our position. They highlight that simple, unambiguous language will be used in the campaign to encourage participation from all. Along with welcoming individuals from all backgrounds and ensuring the safety of activists, it will also employ art, music, and culture to unite communities and give the movement more joy and support.

In this presentation, various questions and insights were shared:

- There are no specific strategies and mapping approaches for the campaign. Therefore, a standard approach is needed for better outcomes.
- How are the goals and geopolitical issues interconnected? We need to understand the Chinese government and its stakeholders, as they exert pressure through financial incentives and other benefits.
- Sometimes it has become challenging to understand how the EIA has been done. We have no option for the process or method they use to do this.

## Relook at and Polish Plans

7 October 2025 | Tuesday | 11:00 AM-11:30 AM

### RIMA's Identity and History

The steering committee consisting of Dr. Nora Sausmikat (Urgewald) and Vidya Dinker (Growthwatch) closed the meeting by repeating the definition of RIMA as an independent, non-formal platform that follows anti-colonial, democratic, and gender-sensitive principles. They reiterated that RIMA is a support network, not a funding network, though it can facilitate funding opportunities. Referring to the "wish tree" from the 2022 Nepal meeting, some outstanding ideas were highlighted like building a database of Chinese contractors, pushing for complaint mechanisms, and monitoring infrastructure.

These wishes were distilled into RIMA's five pillars:

1. Convening
2. Research
3. Tools for advocacy
4. Strategic litigation
5. Capacity building and training

The work under these pillars, including training and online meetings, has led to the current Dhaka conference. This event aims to move the network from broad ideas to concrete action, which was reflected in the three new strategic proposals developed by the working groups to be further discusses.

## Field Visit 8 October 2025 | Tuesday

### Field Visit

After completing the RIMA conference, the team conducted a field visit to the Pyra Power Hub at Kalapara upazila (sub-district) in Patuakhali. The visit aimed to connect the discussions held during the conference with on-ground realities and observe practical challenges faced by communities living in the project area. The objective of the field visit was to understand the perception and grievances of residents toward the project and examine issues related to land acquisition, compensation, employment and public health, etc.

**Field Observation Site:** During the visit, the RIMA team met two community groups from three power plant areas. These are:

- Payra 1320 MW (BCPCL) Coal Power Plant (Phase 1)
- Payra 1320 MW (BCPCL) Coal Power Plant (Phase 2)
- Patuakhali 1320 MW (RNPL) Coal Power Plant

Also the team went to see a govt.-allocated relocation area for the displaced [communities](#). Additionally they visited a primary school situated just next to the power plant boundary wall, which is also used as a cyclone shelter. Finally, the team went to a landsite selected by the government for projects.

### Meeting with Affected Community



**At the first meeting**, the affected community people of Tiakhali Union expressed their sufferings due to the seaport road construction. The key opinion of the people is :

- During the construction of Payra Seaport road, 136 families were displaced from their homes where they had been living for the past 20 to 25 years. They tried to reach out to the government authority but they did not get any proper response. After that, they start their movement for basic rights. They claim this road has no relevance for the project, but they constructed the road for certain groups.
- The local govt. offered each family only 10,000 BDT (approximately 80 USD) as compensation and asked to vacate the area. Their families stated that the amount was insufficient to cover even basic relocation costs.
- They denote that there are no safe drinking water facilities, schools or medical services for the community.

- Due to the protest, the govt. took initiative to relocate them beside Andharmanik River. However, this land is prepared by dumping sand along the riverbank, which is also a violation of the River Protection Act. Moreover, the area is highly vulnerable to submergence by heavy rainfall or cyclones. Even the embankment will be destroyed anytime due to a strong cyclone.
- The people said that they have lost not only their homes but also their livelihoods. They will continue to protest until they get the right compensation and support to rebuild their lives.



**At the second meeting**, the community affected members also explain several aspects of their immense costs they have faced in life due to the power plant. They shared how the impact of plants affects their homes, livelihoods, health and overall well-being.

- The first concern of the people is that there is a lack of safe drinking water options in their area. The existing tube wells are not providing safe water, and even the pond water is getting polluted due to wastewater discharged from the plant.
- They mention that after the power plant was established, the trees gradually began to produce flowers and no longer bear fruit.
- The most serious concern is that many children of maximum houses suffer from allergy-related problems and there are no proper treatment facilities available there.
- The women of the community had small poultry farms and raised goats and cows when they had land. After the land acquisition, they lost these spaces and no longer have land for farming. Additionally, they planted fruits and vegetables in front of their houses which provide nutrition for their children and earn money by selling them.
- The authorities had promised to provide jobs for the unemployed residents, but even after 7-8 years, they did not keep their word.
- Waterlogging is another cause of suffering faced by the community. Also wastewater discharged from the plant and salinity intrusion make the land barren.



- To ensure women's empowerment, they promised to take initiative for the women such as training. But they are not taking the program anymore.
- Another major concern raised was that the affected people received only 5,000 BDT (about 50 USD) in compensation, while others got 40,000 to 45,000 (around 500 USD). According to the law, the government has to pay three times the current market price. But the authorities justified this discrimination by showing different laws. Though they have filed a case regarding the issues, they have not got justice yet.

## Site visit

The team also visited a government-allocated relocation area for the displaced communities located just beside the Andharmanik River of Tiakhali Union, highly exposed to natural disaster. There is a lack of drinking water, sanitation, medical, school, and transportation facilities. The land for rehabilitation is made by dumping sand and looks like a desert along the river. The team saw and walked on the embankment made of sand and soil, which will be washed



away by even small floods and any cyclones. After that, the team went to a primary school which is also used as a cyclone shelter during emergencies. The school authority filed a case so that the government would not acquire the land. They won the case and continued their academic activities. They showed great courage for the school. However, the power plant is going to be operational soon. Then it will become a threat to the health of the children studying in the school.



Finally, the team went to a landsite acquired by Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited (APSCCL). Initially, the government acquired 925 acres of land for two coal-based power plants to generate 1320 MW electricity. But the government cancelled the project later. After that, APSCCL proposed the government to install four 3600 MW LNG power plants in the area. The government took the land but still has not provided

proper compensation to the affected. Before making the colony they displaced all the people from the area. Some families are demanding to get their land back. Moreover, organizations like PRANTOJON, in collaboration with local peoples, are advocating that a solar power plant be set up instead in this area.