

Implementing the Rapid
Planning Toolkit in your city

01



**Writing a Charter for
Your Growing City**

Step 1

Case Studies



THE
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Rapid Planning Toolkit
for Urban Expansion

STEP 1

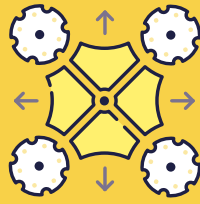
Writing a Charter for Growth



- 1A** Making the case for the 'Rapid Plan'
- 1B** The Charter workshop
- 1C** Consulting the public on the Charter

STEP 2

Creating a Plan for Growth



- 2A** Preliminary mapping
- 2B** Creating a Rapid Growth Plan
- 2C** Structuring the growth areas

STEP 3

Implementing the Plan



- 3A** Identifying landowners & occupants
- 3B** Finalising the plan
- 3C** Demarcating the plan on the ground

STEP 4

Building the Neighbourhoods



- 4A** Preparing for the workshops
- 4B** Neighbourhood workshop
- 4C** Concept designs workshop

STEP 1

Writing a Charter for Growth



Step 1 is a call to rapid action and will help you to foster collaboration amongst a range of stakeholders to create a critical guide for how you will accommodate expected population growth whilst improving the lives of residents.

At the end of Step 1 you will have a **City Growth Charter** that is shared and endorsed by the community, stakeholders and collaborators.

1A

Making the case for the Rapid Plan

- Gain an understanding of your city and its future growth,
- Establish and communicate the need for a Rapid Plan,
- Prepare an plan to implement the Rapid Planning Toolkit and allocate resources.

1B

WORKSHOP

Running the Charter Workshop

- Engage with stakeholders representing various communities, authorities and sectors,
- Create a draft City Growth Charter - a vision for how your City will adapt and grow.

1C

Consulting the public on the Charter

- Publicise the draft City Growth Charter,
- Review feedback on the Charter,
- Finalise the City Growth Charter which will serve as the reference point for stakeholders throughout the development process.

Implementing Step 1 Bo, Sierra Leone & Kazir Gaon, Bangladesh

Introduction & Aims

This chapter outlines two case studies related to the implementation of Step 1 activities. The case study in Bo, Sierra Leone, is a pilot application of the Rapid Planning Toolkit Steps. You can read about how they implemented Step 1. A further case study in Bangladesh details a collaborative student project

undertaken by Birmingham University in the UK and Shahjalal University of Science & Technology in Bangladesh. The students undertake activities of participatory planning in a village called Kazir Gaon, with activities based on the Toolkit process and methodology.

Workbook Contents



Bo, Sierra Leone

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Kazir Gaon, Bangladesh

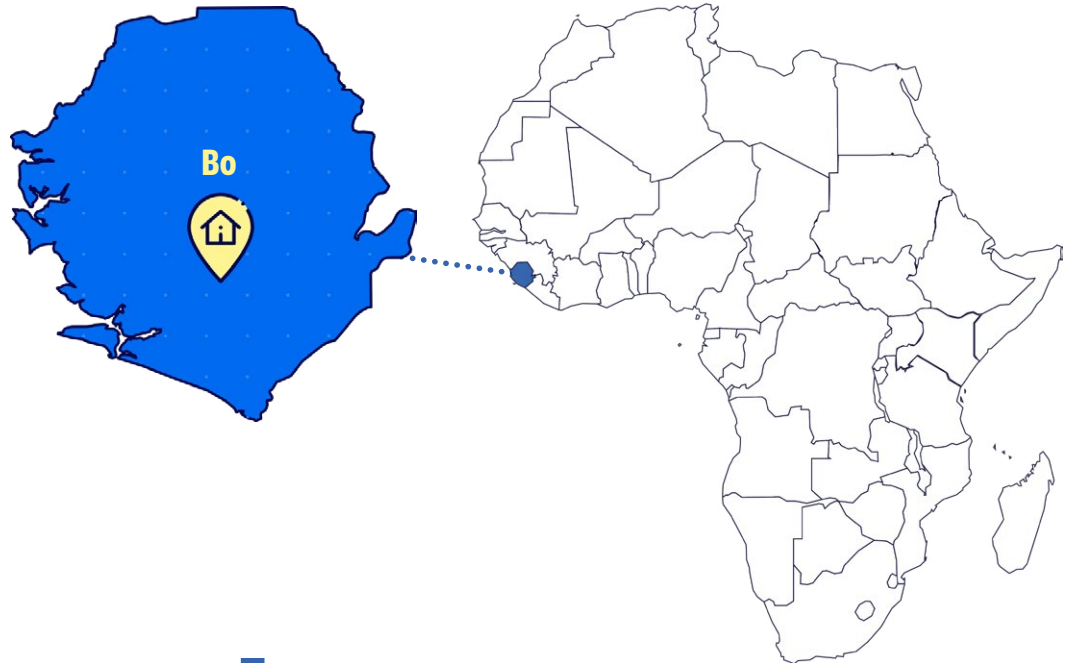
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The Rapid Planning Toolkit

for Urban Expansion

Sierra Leone

Africa



Bo, Sierra Leone

Background

Region: **Africa**

Country: **Sierra Leone**

Bo is a city with a population of 270,000. The city is surrounded by wetlands but, due to rapid population growth and no strategic planning, these areas are being built on. This has resulted in a reduction of land for agriculture, health problems, lack of access to basic and emergency services and depletion of a vital ecosystem.

Bo City Council has been working in partnership with a charity called One World Link (OWL) since 1981. OWL is a voluntary organisation, promoting friendship between the city of Bo in Sierra Leone and Warwick District Council in the UK.





Over the years this friendship has helped to strengthen both communities and their awareness of global and development issues. OWL has established a strong local government relationship which has resulted in joint projects and skills sharing between officers from local councils in both countries. One of these links has been in town planning, connecting planners in the UK with their counterparts in Bo.

Bo City Council has an ambition to develop a spatial plan for Bo, to support the projected rapid growth of the city over the next 25 years. Back in 2017, OWL connected Bo with The Prince's Foundation to discuss the potential of using Bo as a pilot location for the Rapid Planning Toolkit.

Since 2020, Bo City Council has been using the Rapid Planning Toolkit methodology to help plan for rapid population growth and climate change.

Bo was the first city to test the methodology on the ground before the creation of the online courses or supplementary materials. As such, some of the activities described in the Bo case study differ from the current methodology, this is because there were many learnings from the Bo case study that were fed back into the Toolkit and updates were made accordingly.

Nonetheless, despite the fact the methodology was in its early stages and that the COVID-19 pandemic hit shortly after the work began, the team completed Steps 1–3 in just under 9 months from January to September 2020. This document will describe how Bo undertook Step 2 of the Rapid Planning Toolkit, and it will outline the successes and challenges along the way.

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The Core Team in Bo

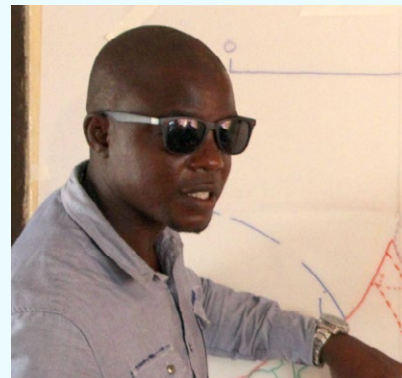
Like many rapidly growing cities in the Global South, Bo City Council had few employees with a built environment professional background. Indeed, Sierra Leone as a country faces a severe lack of capacity in regard to built environment professionals, be that architects, planners or engineers.



Harold Logie Tucker,
Bo City Mayor



Haja Halimah Lukay,
Development Planning Officer
Bo City Council



Mohamed Mattia,
Engineer
Bo City Council

Haja Halimah Lukay, the Development Planning Officer, was charged with leading the work of the Rapid Planning Toolkit.

Haja had a degree in Home Economics, but no experience in a built environment profession. Nonetheless, Haja's passion and drive to create a sustainable city ensured that implementing the Rapid Planning Toolkit was possible and she developed her own skills and confidence through the process.

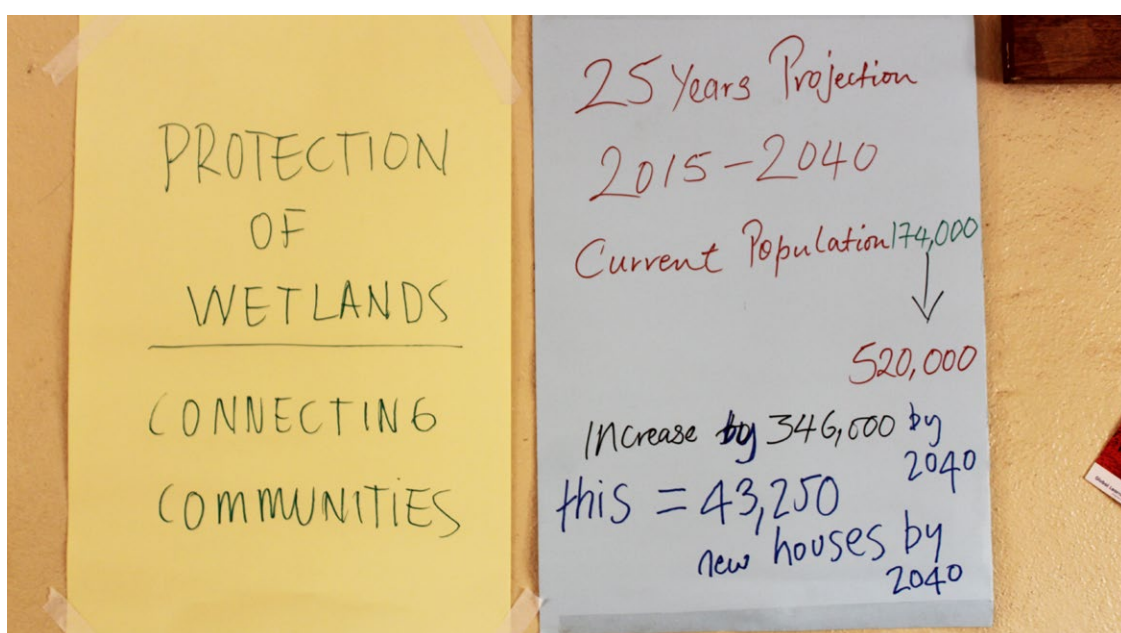
The Mayor at the time, Harold Logie Tucker, was very supportive of the work, and Haja was supported by other team members, including the sole built environment professional in the council, Mohamed Mattia, an engineer.

Haja is a keen advocate of the Toolkit. She says:

“Community ownership has been the greatest success story for us, because we cannot plan in isolation and previously we did not have access to the Toolkit to guide us.”

Step 1A - Making the case for the Rapid Plan

During this preparatory step, a small team from Bo City Council, led by Haja Halimah Lukay, along with the in-country technical support Catriona Forbes, worked through the necessary steps to prepare for the Charter Workshop.



Hear what Haja Halimah Lukay has to say about why implementing a rapid growth plan was necessary for the city.



During Step 1A, the team calculated the future urban population growth projections and the amount of land needed to accommodate that growth; their population of 174,000 in 2015 is expected to grow to 540,000 by 2040. This was documented in a PowerPoint presentation shared during their Charter Workshop (Step 1B).

The team also identified key stakeholders, engaged with them and invited them to the Charter Workshop.

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Step 1B - Running the Charter Workshop

The Charter Workshop in Bo was attended by over 50 people representing a variety of stakeholders.



Stakeholders in attendance included:

- Bo City Council
- Bo District Council, including the Chairman
- Civil Society
- Paramount Chiefs
- Landowning families
- Police representatives
- Makeni City Council (a nearby city that wanted to learn from the process)
- National Government representatives from the Ministry of Lands, Officer for National Security, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

This was a very important moment for Bo City Council because it was the first time that such a diverse range of stakeholders had been brought together to discuss the issue of rapid urbanisation in Bo.

The day was split into two parts. The first part was morning presentations and discussions in a lecture-style format.

Writing a Charter for Your Growing City

Implementing Step 1



The morning presentations were led by Haja Halimah Lukay. She explained to all the stakeholders why they were gathered there (to create a shared vision for their growing city) and what they were hoping to achieve by the end of the day (a draft City Charter).

The second part was a more interactive session in the afternoon, developing the draft City Growth Charter in smaller groups with flipcharts and pens.

The questions asked were:

- What are the strengths of the city?
- How do you want your city to look in the next 20–30 years?
- What will be the impact?
- What are the areas of possible growth?



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A representative from each group presented their group's ideas at the end of the day, and these were compiled to create the first draft of the City Growth Charter.

You can watch these short videos from stakeholders that attended the meeting explaining why they think planning for rapid urbanisation is important.

Bo city council charter The Charter for a Rapidly Growing City

INTRODUCTION

Bo city is projected to grow from 175,000 to 520,000 people in the next 25 years. This triple its population to 345,000. Rapid growth across the city is already manifesting in solid waste management and control and dealing with unplanned settlement. Unless Bo city can manage the predicted growth well, construction on wetland, flooding and access, continue to be emerging issue. A collective effort is required to ensure this does not happen. If the Bo city can project a well-planned city for residential, industrial and agricultural use through sympathetic spatial planning, then the city will be able to grow in a managed way. This charter outlines the vision for Bo city and the commitments that will be made to implement this vision

Poorly managed rapid growth is causing a multitude of problems.

- ☐ Construction on wetland
- ☐ Managing urban sanitation and solid waste management
- ☐ Dealing with unplanned settlement
- ☐ Non application of building regulation and development control
- ☐ The capacity of the staff to lead the delivery and management the systems
- ☐ The availability of software program for management and control

In order to manage rapid growth, the city will need to map and reserve

- i) rights of way for roads
- ii) land for community assets (schools, markets, health centres, and skip location)

To do this, all stakeholders must be involved. In Bo city this include: the paramount chief as custodian of land, landowning family as beneficiaries, and civil society for arbitration, Ministry Department and Agencies and Development partner for plan implementation, community representative women, youths, disable to ensure community ownership, councillors for strong political will and the media for information dissemination are key stakeholder identified in delivery a safe and protected city

In order to *protect our wetlands and connect our communities* there are three simple steps.

- 1) Mapping: By mapping primary and feeder roads, new connecting routes can be identified. By mapping the wetland land to be protected can be identified. By mapping existing community assets, locations for further assets can be identified.
- 2) Coordinating: By working with landowners and relevant stakeholders, protected roads and areas can be agreed.
- 3) Implementing: By identifying priority neighbourhoods, plans can be implemented at a manageable scale. By marking out routes, protected areas and sites for community assets using stakes and trees, rapid growth will be managed neighbourhood by neighbourhood.

THE COMMITMENT 'in 2020:

We commit to achieving this together as stakeholder.

In 1 year, will have structured four neighbourhoods along the south east west and north within the municipality.

In 2 years offsetting of roads, planting of tree to protect roads from encroachment and Allocation and preservation of land for development

Development of building regulation and development control

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Step 1C - **Consulting the public on the Charter**

Using the draft Charter, the Bo City Council team undertook outreach sessions with the community to share the content and intentions of the Charter.

This included radio broadcasts and interactions with citizens across the city.

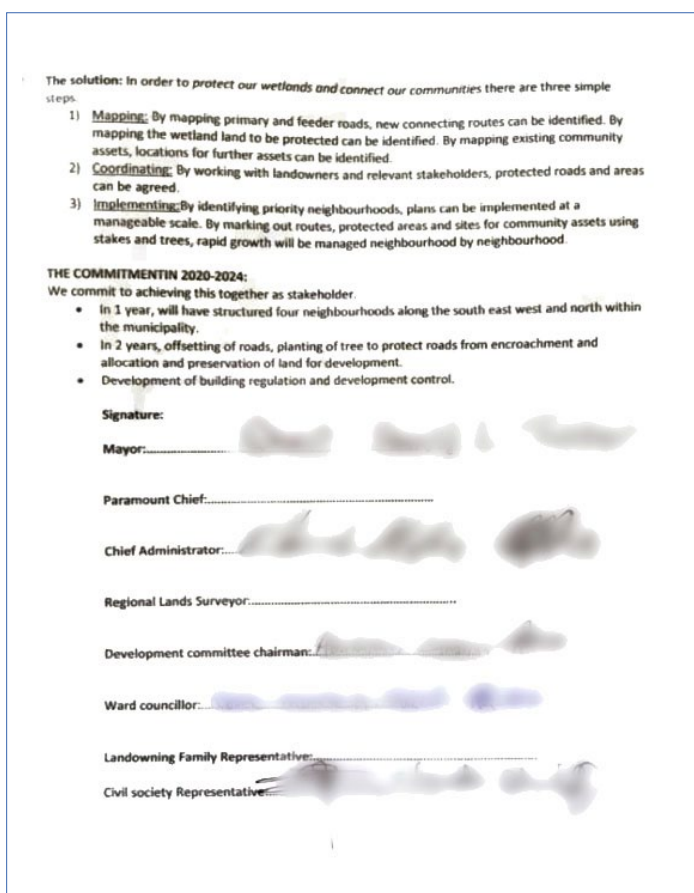
More informal methods of community outreach were also undertaken because not all residents have access to formal channels for information dissemination and feedback.



Outcomes of implementing Step 1

Bo City Council undertook the activities in Steps 1A, 1B and 1C extremely successfully, and felt they learnt three key lessons from Step 1:

1. The importance of using an integrated approach,
2. The importance of strengthening public participation and creating space for key stakeholders to be involved in all stages of planning and implementation,
3. Ensuring the council anticipates instead of reacts to problems.



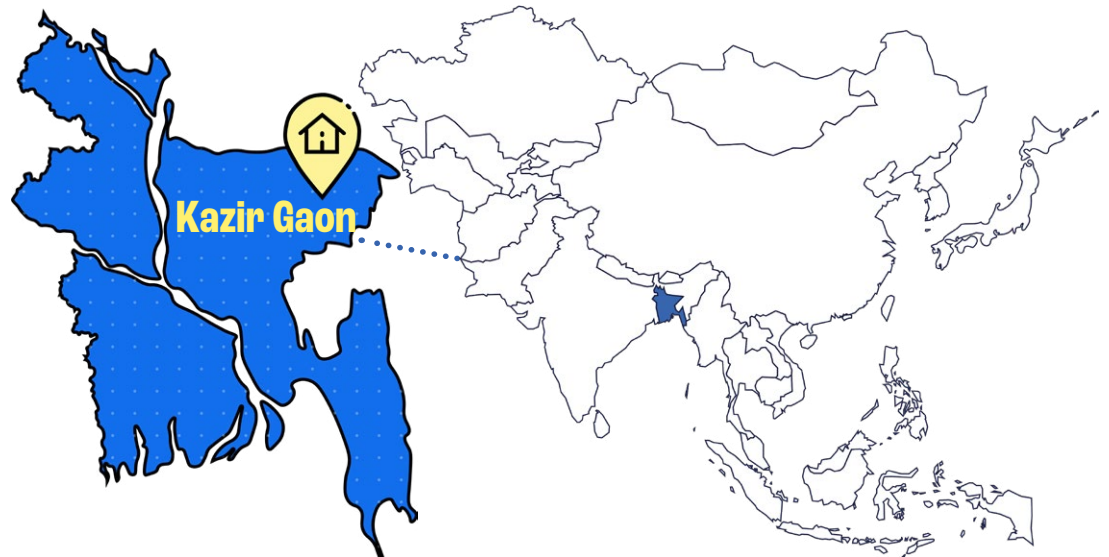
The signed Bo City Charter

The Rapid Planning Toolkit

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Bangladesh

Asia



Kazir Gaon, Bangladesh

Background

Region: **Asia**

Country: **Bangladesh**

Kazir Gaon is a village which sits within a unique seasonal wetland ecosystem, (called a hoar), in the north-east area of Bangladesh, near Sylhet. The village has grown exponentially over the past 10 years, with no planning or guidance to manage development.

The lack of planning has meant that development has taken place without considering the adequacy and provision of access to drinking water, sanitation, healthcare and educational facilities. The unplanned growth has also resulted in poor sanitation due to a lack of drainage infrastructure leading to an increased risk of flooding.

As a coastal, low-lying country, Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of sea-level rise and increasingly intense monsoon seasons. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that about 17% of Bangladeshis would need to be relocated in the next decade, if global warming persists at the present rate, adding further pressure to already growing towns, cities and villages.





Image provided by SUST

To tackle the issues of rapid growth, an international university collaboration was formed, specifically created to explore implementation of the Toolkit in this village setting. The Gramer Haor Co_Lab was initiated in 2019 as a partnership between Birmingham City University (BCU) in the UK and Shahjalal University of Science & Technology (SUST) in Bangladesh.

Students enrolled in Bachelor of Arts in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, or Landscape Architecture with Urban Design, were able to participate in this collaborative live project, involving the engagement of local stakeholders, authorities and communities, to understand the real issues of people living in the rural area of Kazir Gaon.

With the support of The King's Foundation, the Rapid Planning Toolkit offered a project structure, which was adapted to suit the particular circumstances of the university collaboration, and provided a methodology to conduct a participatory planning process.

The Co_Lab has so far operated over 3 academic seasons, with a fourth season starting in January 2024, with each cohort of students further progressing the Rapid Planning Toolkit process with the local stakeholders and community.

Watch this video for an introduction into the Gramer Haor Co_Lab. Video link: vimeo.com/773406571



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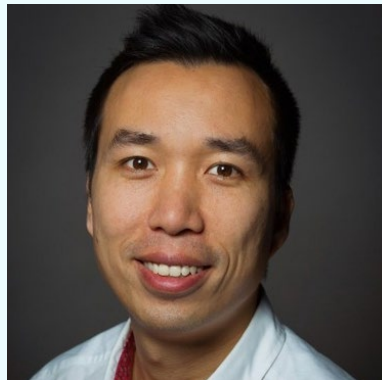
The Gramer Haor Co_Lab Team

The Gramer Haor Co_Lab project in Kazir Gaon was led by Abubokkar Siddiki, and faculty members of Birmingham City University and Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, with the support of The King's Foundation providing guidance on the Rapid Planning Toolkit methodology.



Abubokkar Siddiki,

Project Lead and Architect
Founder / Director at Gaon
Workshop



Eccles Ng,

Course Director at
Birmingham City University



Kawshik Saha,

Associate Professor at
Shahjalal University of
Science and Technology

In 2018, on a visit to his birthplace, the village of Kazir Gaon, Abubokkar Siddiki noticed that the village had grown exponentially over the past 10 years. The rate of growth of the village showed its potential to become a small-town merging with the 8 other surrounding villages over the next 15 – 20 years.

Like many other villages in Bangladesh, Kazir Gaon is faced with challenges to manage and to plan for its growth. Unfortunately, they do not have access to professional help and support needed to do this.

As an architect practicing and teaching in the UK, Abubokkar Siddiki approached The King's Foundation regarding the Rapid Planning Toolkit methodology. Kazir Gaon was highlighted as a good opportunity to test the Toolkit in a village context. With the agreement of BCU and SUST, the Gramer Haor Co_Lab was formed.

This module was created specifically to apply the Rapid Planning Toolkit in Kazir Gaon, with students from both universities involved in developing a sustainable masterplan for the village.

“The Gramer Co.Lab is an excellent opportunity for SUST students to show their commitment to community and context. One of our key teaching philosophies is to enhance students’ capacity to plan and design in a critical ecological context.

The village of Kazir Gaon turned into a living laboratory to study the complex relationship between ecology and society. On top of that, the cross-cultural learning experience of Co_Lab allowed students to confront their cultural and geographical boundaries.”

- Kawshik Saha

Step 1A - **Co_Lab Season 1**

It was necessary for the Rapid Planning Toolkit process and timeline to be adapted to suit the context, situation and academic requirements of the Co_Lab, whilst maintaining the principles and objectives of the methodology.



Image provided by SUST

To fulfill Step 1A (Making the Case for the Rapid Plan), the team would need to gain permission from the village council, known as the 'panchayat'. They would also need to identify and approach stakeholders to communicate the intention of their project.

In the first season of the Gramer Haor Co_Lab, which began in January 2021, BCU students from the UK were not able to travel to Bangladesh because of restrictions due to the Covid pandemic. Therefore, the SUST students in Bangladesh began with a visit to the village, sharing their findings with the BCU students in the UK.

The students toured the village in small groups and met with local people, including the village leaders, to gather information. This was the first time that the villagers had been visited by a university group - with an explanation of what they were doing and that they were from the university, they were able to gain the trust of local people and support of the panchayat to pursue the project.

This first cohort of the Co_Lab then worked on a vision for how the village could grow sustainably, through conversations with students, villagers, and local government representatives.

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Step 1B - Co_Lab Season 2

The Gramer Haor Co_Lab project in Kazir Gaon was led by faculty members of BCU and SUST, with the support of the King's Foundation providing guidance on the Rapid Planning Toolkit methodology.



In the second year of the Co_Lab, a workshop was held, organised and facilitated by SUST students and faculty staff, with funding from the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP). Key stakeholders and village residents attended in person and staff and students from BCU took part virtually.

Charter Workshop

The workshop was organised in co-ordination with the village community, using local volunteers to help with facilitation, and employing local services where needed, e.g. to provide food and refreshments to the participants.

The workshop took place on a Saturday between 10am – 2pm, at a local primary school. It was attended by approximately 100 local stakeholders, including a government representative of the sub-district region. Of these participants, 18 were women, one of whom stated that it was the first time she had been asked her opinion of how her village could be improved.

The workshop began with an introduction session: Abubokkar explained the objectives of the workshop, Kawshik Saha addressed the importance of planning and a local resident shared some of the major local issues for Kazingaon. Ben Bolgar from The King's Foundation also delivered an overview of the Rapid Planning Toolkit virtually, which was dubbed over in Bangla.

The participants were split into 4 groups, one of which only included women. Each group had 1 co-ordinator, 4 facilitators and initially 15-18 participants, with more attendees arriving later in the day and joining the discussions. The participants all introduced themselves to their group, and began a discussion about the history of the village and how it had changed over the years. They identified existing issues and problems that the villagers faced and produced a list of issues affecting the future development of the village.



Images provided by SUST

The Charter

Based on the conversations, a Charter was drafted to identify what changes were felt to be needed. The Charter included the following objectives, and this was signed by each group:

1. Tube well for each of the houses,
2. Bathroom and toilet for the houses,
3. Bathroom and toilets for the bazaar,
4. Electricity, bathroom, tube well (East Para, the new extension towards Ghoot Gaon),
5. Sewing machine and training,
6. Road improvements, healthcare centre, women education improvement,
7. Home improvements,
8. Gas for cooking,
9. Hospital,
10. Road improvements,
11. Education improvement,
12. Road from Kazir Gaon to Shamar Gaon, Kazir Gaon and Kazir Bazaar,
13. Education for children available, higher education (college & universities) and accessibility,
14. Increase the size of the village to accommodate population growth,
15. Rubbish collection,
16. Improve roads around the village.

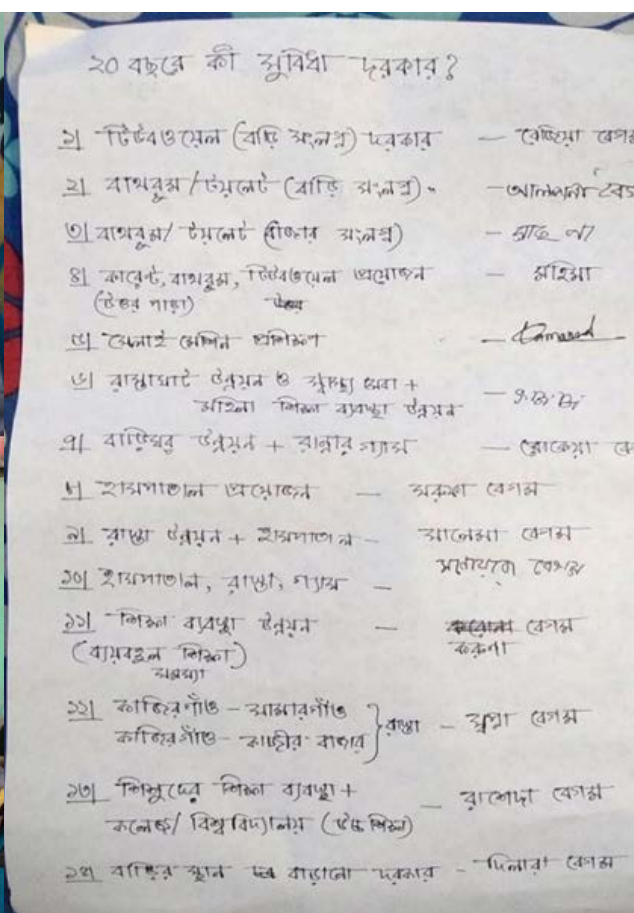
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Workshop Conclusions

The facilitators of the Co_Lab have shared some important outcomes from the workshop:

- The workshop provided an opportunity for the participants to share their insights, which highlighted an existing awareness of rapid growth taking place in their village,
- The participants were compelled to think about these known issues in a different way, recognising the importance of planning for sustainable growth,
- They felt empowered to take ownership of the changes taking place in their community and to also make changes to their lives and their environment,
- In signing the Charter, they agreed to what is needed to achieve sustainable growth of the village and surrounding areas,
- It built stronger relationships with the villagers, government officers and wider stakeholders,
- The workshop gave an equal voice to a diverse group of people, across genders, generations and social class, who were able to speak up about their daily problems, and their hopes, dreams and aspirations for their village and lifestyles,
- Women spoke confidently about what they need and want to better their environment and lifestyle.



The Charter Workshop and draft Charter Images provided by SUST

Outcomes of the Co_Lab



The work of the Co_Lab has brought together stakeholders from across the village, in many cases engaging residents for the first time to consider what the community needs to implement to ensure a sustainable future. Following a successful process of workshops and stakeholder engagement, the local government informally agreed to allocate approximately 1 acre of land to develop a community hub, which would provide facilities for Kazir Gaon residents.

The Co_Lab continues with its 4th cohort of students to progress the work in Kazir Gaon. The programme has also received international recognition with a

West Midlands National Park International Project Award 2022 and an exhibition at the Building Centre in London in 2023.

The project leaders now hope to unlock further funding for the next stage, including demarcation and protection of development sites and improvement of basic infrastructure. They are also working with the community on plans to redevelop the local mosque, so that it will be able to accommodate a larger population and support the community as it grows.

Rapid Planning Toolkit

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