

Policy Summary

Three workshops were held in September 2020 on waterlogging and flooding; waste management; and housing and neighbourhood dynamics linked with access to health and equity in Dhaka city.

These online workshops created an opportunity to build relationships between policy professionals, government authorities, researchers and practitioners around key topics of Pathways' work in Dhaka, despite the limitations of knowledge sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The interactive meetings highlighted some issues that are high priority for Dhaka and many overlapping themes linking, for example, waterlogging to waste management and flooding to housing and neighbourhood issues. More specifically:

- Themes such as **political will and commitment** and **lack of coordination between different actors** seem to be cross cutting and key to all the proposed solutions. Both are linked with **budget allocations** and **sustainability of interventions**. This applies, for example, to the case of waterlogging, where Dhaka City corporation, Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WASA) and the Capital Development Authority of the Government of Bangladesh (RAJUK) suffer from duplication of efforts as well as lack of common long-term vision. Duplication has an impact on human and budgetary resources allocated to address issues of flooding and is a barrier to sustainable actions that can be enforced. In terms of housing, lack of facilities in parts of the city and informal settlements leading to inequalities and health-related issues would also benefit from a more integrated approach, in this case by integrating private sector largely managing housing in Dhaka and government authorities involved in providing services.
- The **implementation and enforcement of policies**, linked with **collective initiatives and civic responsibilities**. In the case of housing, lack of political commitment and lack of connectedness between government action and dwellers of different parts of the city has been identified as both a key barrier and a potential enabler for further action. This has also emerged in the waterlogging and flooding and waste management workshops; the former focussed on awareness interventions and positive activities combined with fine systems to educate, encourage good reactions and discourage bad habits. The latter formalised practical solutions in terms of combining household-level awareness campaigns with citizens-led initiatives regarding local collection points, frequency of collection, etc.
- **Underlying issues were impacting on all three topics that were in fact closely interrelated**. For example, it was made explicit that lack of awareness around knock-on effect of household waste disposal was a major contributing factor in waterlogging problems of the drainage system; lack of integrated action and planning around waste management has an impact on housing quality, neighbourhood safety and urban health; in turn, lack of a legal system for informal settlements and slums leads to limited facilities for specific neighbourhood enhancing issues of equity, especially around health.

The project's next steps include reflecting on current state of these issues and identifying potential interventions that will be modelled to better understand implications and overlaps for Dhaka city. Pathways' researchers aim to identify an integrated approach of sharing information and knowledge across stakeholders to prevent undertaking inefficient projects and wastage of resources across the topics. Integrated and systematic analyses of how different factors and variables relate to each other and ramify are key for Pathways' future work; we aim to hold more workshops in the coming months to discuss and validate these strategies that could be modelled later in the project, creating policy scenarios that would support the city officials' decision-making.