

# How do other people travel?

## Bangladesh

### Boat Schools Bring Education to Girls in Flood-Prone Bangladesh

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Many children in rural areas of Bangladesh, particularly girls, do not have access to education. Often, the nearest school is miles away and parents are reluctant to send girls to distant locations due to the risk of kidnapping and because the travel takes away too many hours from housework. Furthermore, during the monsoon season many schools find themselves under water and children can go for months without classroom instructions. After the waters recede, many never return and drop out indefinitely.



These issues prompted Mohammed Rezwan, a native of flood-prone Chalanbeel region in north-western Bangladesh, to think of a simple, but effective solution: If children can't go to school, the school should go to them – in the form of boats! An architect by profession, he founded the non-profit Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha, and instead of designing houses, designed boats. Boats have been a traditional feature of these river areas, and Rezwan converted them to schools. The boats function as school buses and classrooms and allow children to go to school even during the monsoon season. For many girls, they represent the only opportunity for education.

I met Rezwan and his co-workers as a fellow of the Global Fund for Children that supports Shidhulai's programs. Upon seeing Shidhulai's work I was impressed how a simple, but innovative idea can have an immense impact on so many lives. In addition to schools, Shidhulai built floating libraries, clinics and solar power stations. Villagers that previously had no access to doctors or electricity were now receiving medicine, information about agriculture and solar lamps free of charge. And the classrooms are filled predominantly with girls, all eager to learn. They now have the promise of a better future and opportunities that their mothers never had.

Source: <http://photophilanthropy.org/gallery-posts/boat-schools-bring-education-to-girls-in-flood-prone-bangladesh/>