



Message from the Director

Md. Liakath Ali, PhD
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BRAC Urban Development Programme (UDP) has adopted a programme specific strategic plan to adapt to the new normal originated due to the outbreak of COVID-19. UDP acted accordingly as the needs of urban poor shifted rapidly, from food support to cash grants to resuming livelihood and meeting other essential needs. Since the onset of the first confirmed COVID-19 case in Bangladesh, in coordination with the BRAC's central response UDP actively participated in awareness building, hand washing & hand sanitizing, food distribution and cash support to the affected communities across the 20 working cities.

Despite health emergencies, we supported RMG workers and communities through our three One-Stop Service Centres following the health regulations needed for COVID 19. Our regular programmatic activities were hampered in the last week of March. However, we resumed operations with seed distribution in May and small scale infrastructural development in June by ensuring all possible safety measures for the frontline staff and workers.

In this journey, we lost two of our colleagues Maria Ahmad, Senior Manager, and Md. Jalal Hossain, Field Coordinator. The demise of such energetic and spirited teammates is painful and difficult to manage, and their memory and legacy will continue for many days. They will always remain in our heart.

Amid the pandemic, super cyclone Amphan hit coastal districts, including Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat on 20 May that deepened the crisis of life and living of the poorest. UDP came up with cash support to affected households especially in Satkhira and Khulna.

I express my gratitude to our frontline and all relevant colleagues for taking the risk to contain contagion and limit its impact on urban poor.

Notwithstanding all odds, challenges, plights, and pains, the thread of life will continue, and adaptation with the new normal is the only theory for today and tomorrow.

Let us walk with the changing environment for the cities and their dwellers.



“ I express my gratitude to our frontline and all relevant colleagues for taking the risk to contain contagion and limit its impact on urban poor. ”

-Md. Liakath Ali, PhD

In loving memory of Maria Apa and Jalal Bhai



Maria Apa

Maria Ahmed, Senior Manager, BRAC Urban Development Programme, passed away on 29 May (Friday) at Anwar Khan Modern Hospital after being infected with COVID-19. Maria Apa, 43, worked with BRAC for 10 years. BRAC UDP arranged a remembrance session on 30 May, where Executive Director Asif Saleh and UDP Director Dr Md. Liakath Ali along with other BRAC staff recalled her contribution to BRAC and all beautiful memories she left us with.

Maria Apa joined BRAC in 2002 as a Financial Analyst and worked there till 2006. She joined a multinational company and rejoined BRAC in 2014. She worked until last breath as a senior manager of Monitoring and Evaluation at UDP. Truly, Maria Apa was always a smiling, good-natured person with many qualities.

Jalal Bhai

Md. Jalal Hossain, Field Coordinator of BRAC Urban Development Programme, passed away on 17 June. He was 48 years old. Jalal Bhai died of cardiac arrest while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Jalal Bhai joined the UDP Dhaka team in March 2020. In his short span of work with BRAC, Jalal Bhai worked in the frontline of UDP's COVID-19 response and aware people on hand washing, sanitise, disinfect place, maintain social distance etc. He actively participated in food distribution and cash support activities. UDP arranged a remembrance programme on 21 June, where UDP Director Md. Liakath Ali and senior staff share their memories.



COVID-19 Response

In order to tackle the novel coronavirus, BRAC Urban Development Programme (UDP) has participated in several emergency responses between April and June, in continuation of emergency response activities started on 19 March. UDP has adopted strategies to adapt the new normal originated by the pandemic and acted accordingly as the need of urban poor shifted rapidly, from food to money to resuming livelihoods.

Overall COVID-19 response by UDP:

Till 30 June, UDP has provided cash support to 72,715 poor households across all 20 operating cities and distributed essential food packages to 9,140 households. From the onset of COVID19 on 8 March to 30 June, UDP distributed 225,000 leaflets and stickers in low-income densely populated areas of the cities across the country. By setting up 52 booths and hanging awareness banners, the awareness campaigns have made millions of people aware of the coronavirus. Around 250,000 liquid soap sachets, 83,000 soap bars were distributed and 104 washing facilities have been established in 75 public spots to contain the contagion, reaching 500,000 with hand wash facilities. Besides, 810 paramedic and pharmacists were oriented with special guidelines, thus they can aware people and maintain hygiene in pharmacies. All the efforts reached 1,856,522 people during the pandemic.

Below are some of the interventions carried out in the second quarter;

Hand Wash and Sanitise Facilities:

To ensure people's access to hand wash and sanitise facilities, UDP in this quarter distributed 158,477 liquid soap sachets and 33,000 soap bars and set up 49 more washing facilities at 36 spots across the cities. More than 221,497 people were provided with hand wash and sanitise through total 104 washing facilities in 75 public spots and several hundred booths across the cities. A similar initiative has been taken by Savar, Tongi and Gazipur OSSC to provide handwashing facilities to the RMG workers. RMG workers have been provided with masks, hand gloves, apron and surgical caps and hand sanitiser so that they can ensure personal safety.

Food Aid: BRAC UDP kicked off essential food package support to 7,500 poor households living in informal settlements in Dhaka North and South City Corporations on 31 March and distribution carried on till mid April. Food packages were also distributed among 251 sex workers in Mymensingh and Faridpur in April. In collaboration with Sylhet and Mymensingh city corporations and Faridpur Municipality, UDP distributed 1,189 food packages to marginal and poor households to cope with the hit of income loss. The food package consists of 7 kg rice, 1kg lentil, 1kg salt, 2kg flour, 1 litre edible oil, 2 pieces of soaps and half a kg detergent powder.

72,715

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500,000

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810

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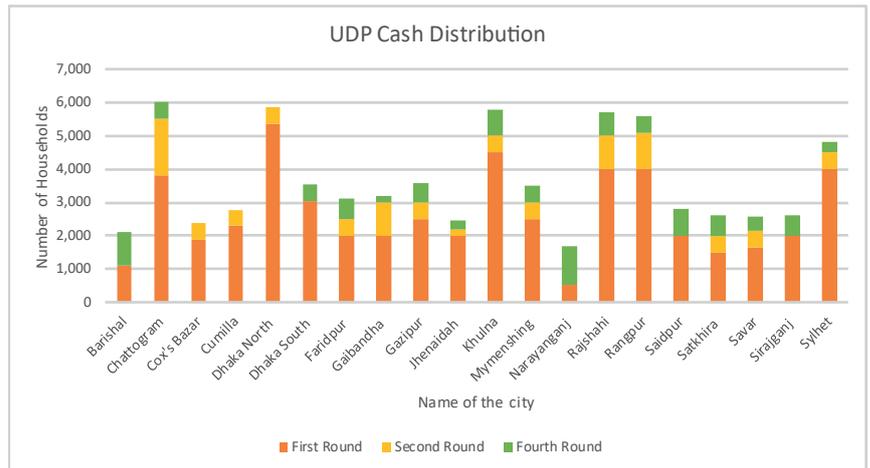
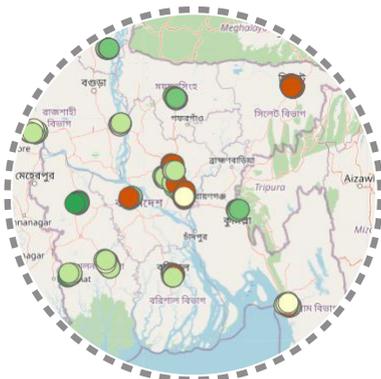
food packages distributed to marginal and poor households



Cash Support: BRAC UDP has disbursed BDT 1,500 (USD 18) to each of the 72,715 poor households across twenty cities in Bangladesh. In the first round of cash support, UDP provided cash support to 52,715 poor households and in the second and fourth round another 20,000 poor households across the cities were brought under cash support. The cash support was designed to support a 4-member household for at least two weeks.

The cash support reached urban poor, destitute, physically challenged, sudden jobless, women-led families and those who suffered most during the lockdown in major cities and towns. The programme participant selection process involved door to door investigation, cross-checked by local Ward councillors, community leaders, and the recently developed urban slum map. In order to avoid duplication, a hard copy is prepared by muster roll and soft copy for computer preservation. The beneficiaries who have bKash accounts were selected for the cashless transaction.

Urban Slum Mapping: BRAC has taken an initiative to coordinate the sporadic volunteer and NGO activities in the urban areas and launched a map for the 453 slums in 12 city corporations and 8 municipalities with household data. This (http://urbanslummap.brac.net/slum_map.html) one-stop data portal will equip users with key demographic data about some of Bangladesh's urban slums. The objective is to enable individuals and organisations working to distribute relief to be able to plan more effectively so that they reach the people in the most need, reduce duplication and to maximise the reach of our collective efforts. Till last week of June, 20 organisations have contributed to the BRAC urban slum map.



Story from the ground

Maksud Begum (32) lives in Suhel Miah Colony of West Pir neighbourhood under Ward No. 8 in Sylhet City Corporation. Maksud's husband works as a van driver. They have been living in the colony for about 8 years with their 4 children. Maksud worked as a housemaid in other houses. Her family was doing well with their income but the outbreak of coronavirus impacted the economic situation of her family.

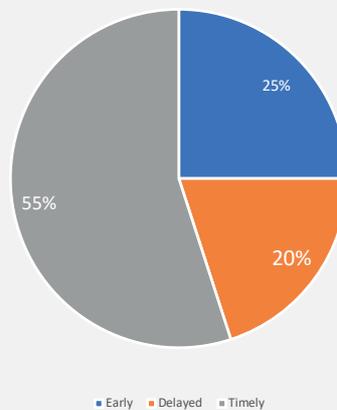
After 'general holiday' was imposed her husband's salary was reduced and she was denied entry to the house where she worked for controlling the spread of the virus. Maksud Begum became too tense with the thought of providing meals for her children. She had never faced such difficult situation before and felt helpless

On 8 April 2020, Sajeda Sheuli, community organiser of BRAC-Urban Development Programme handed over BDT 1500 to Maksud as a part of the cash grant support to UDP COVID response. Maksud Begum was very touched with the sudden help and said, "BRAC has been our ray of hope in these dark days. BRAC has always stood by us in our perils and we could not be more thankful".

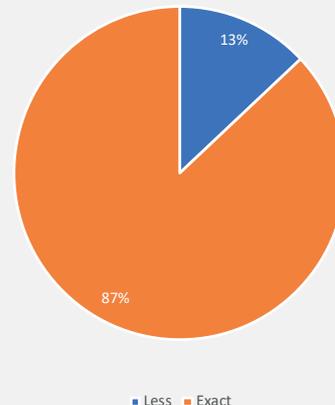
Research and Advocacy

In April, a quick survey on the distribution of wages by RMG Factories during the crisis of COVID-19 has revealed that 59% of RMG employees received their salary. Of them, 55% received the salary on time and 87% received their defined salary while less than 13% got a reduced salary. The study also showed that 41% of the participants did not get wages. 38% RMG factory at Savar, 45% RMG factory at Gazipur and 33% RMG factory at Tongi did not pay the wages up to 13 April 2020.

Wage Receive Time



Wage Received in Amount



UDP along with the Microfinance Programme (MF) and Partnership Strengthening Unit (PSU) conducted a rapid perception survey titled “COVID-19 Awareness and Economic Impact” in the first week of April. The survey revealed 99.6% were aware of the disease, and two third first learned about the virus through television. The economic impact seems to have affected almost all respondents, while wage labourers in the non-agricultural sector reported the most significant compared to those in the agricultural sector. Of the total respondents, 14% reported having no food in their homes, but the rate was 18% in urban areas.

A rapid survey conducted in last week of April by UDP in major urban areas has shown that of the BRAC cash support recipients, 29% received government food relief and 5% received relief from other organizations and individual donors.

The UDP research team conducted a rapid assessment on community level COVID-19 response in Narayanganj and Gazipur in June. The findings showed that communities do not want to get a coronavirus test for social stigma. The respondent said that social distancing should be followed very strictly in order to stay away from infection but in the dense community maintaining social distance is impossible. The study also found that livelihood patterns have been changing. Day labourers and housemaids are struggling to get their work back.

A rapid study named “Understanding the community behaviour and practice among slum populations of Dhaka North City Corporation in the time of Corona lockdown” was conducted in the first week of June found that other than a few monthly wage earners, people from the lower-income groups are now depending on government and non-government emergency relief. Many said that people have already started to show a high level of resistance to lockdown, isolation, or staying at home. Majority of respondents hardly reported any health issues in the time of lockdown. From the very beginning of economic lockdown, many slum dwellers didn't find any reason to stay in their existing community due to unavailability of employment.

Another Rapid perception study on CO and CDO leaders of Dhaka city about community level isolation practice conducted in last week of June. It showed that above 70% community leaders believe people have a tendency of hiding symptoms of corona. Still, local drug stores remain to be the only option for regular health care. Above 60% of CDO leaders and near about 80% of community volunteers agreed upon high levels of social gathering in tea stalls, majority of people believe no isolation is possible in the community. Also, people do believe that it is the responsibility of GO or NGO to build an isolation centre in the community.

Rapid Situation analysis of Housing support Recipients has revealed that about 77% HHs are experiencing reduced income than before the lockdown period and 20% HHs have no income now. In case about 25% HHs, the total number of earning members of the family has been reduced and 20% people have already changed their occupation due to pandemic and 5.7% are thinking to change their occupation to absorb the shock.

Capacity Development activities

Amid the pandemic, capacity development activities were continued through the virtual platform bracedia. During this time, 487 staff completed “Know Corona and Stay Safe” training and 484 Head Office and Field Office staff completed training on “Safeguarding For All”.

In the virtual workshop on “Safeguarding Risk Assessment”, 16 staff participated. A two-day long training titled “Community Support Team Training” was arranged at Savar CDM where 20 community organisers participated. Through the training and workshop, BRAC staff highlighted were trained up on gender based violence, safeguarding of child, senior citizens and physically challenged people, child marriage, personal hygiene maintenance, nutrition food intake etc.

Infrastructure Development works resume

In June UDP resumed infrastructure construction work of 4,389ft drainage network at Satkhira, Khulna, Chattogram, Jhenaidah & Faridpur, 230ft road network at Jhenaidah, 245ft footpath at Chattogram, 2 community toilets at Chattogram, one school wash at Faridpur and one mini pipe water supply system in Savar. The infrastructure development will provide facilities to 140,225 people in the cities.

A reduced number of laborers were hired from the community so that outsiders cannot enter in the community and social distance could be maintained properly. In addition, personal safety equipment like mask, hand sanitizer, hand washing, and gloves are being provided for field workers and labourers to minimize the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

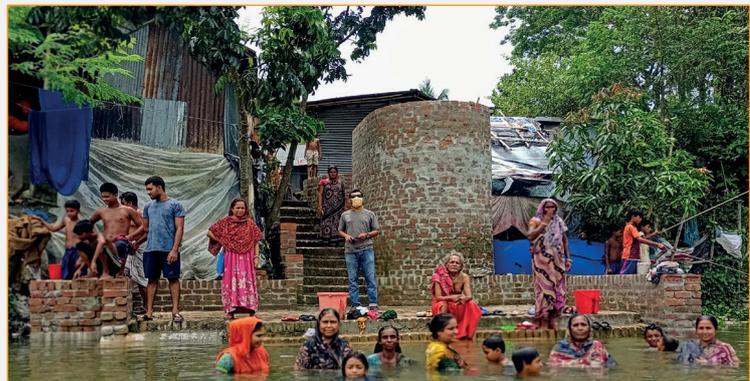


Waste management in Mymensingh



Aiming to ensure a better and functional waste management system, UDP distributed two rickshaw vans, 50 plastic drums and safety products for van drivers at Agrakanda and Dhansiri Residential Area and Officers Colony in Mymensingh City Corporation. Under the supervision of Ward no. 20 councillor offices, waste collectors will collect waste from door to door in exchange for a minimal monthly fee and dump the waste at a nearby secondary dumping station managed by city corporations.

Nabaganga River Ghat constructed at Satbaria, Jhenaidah



The Nabaganga River flows next to the Satbaria low-income community in Jhenaidah. People of the community use the river for bathing, fishing and communication, but in the absence of a stairway, people have to risk using a muddy slope to go down the river. Some people also dump waste into the river bank, making the area a waste dumping ground that eventually pollutes the river water. Under these circumstances, Satbaria Community Development Organisation (CDO) adopted a plan to build a staircase on the bank of the river. To ease the life of the community, Jhenaidah Municipality, UDP, CDO and Co-Creation Architects came up with community-led architectural design and necessary funds to build the ghat and approach roads. Amid the pandemic, the parties have undertaken construction work maintaining health safety regulations.

The ghat will enable the people of the community to use the river water for different uses. The ghat will also help the community to conserve the river bank, enhance the beauty of the community and the city, keep the environment safe and avert accidents. The member of the community believe that the ghat will turn into a recreational place for them.

Urban Agriculture

COVID-19 could double the number of people facing acute food insecurity across the world - pushing 130 million more to the brink of starvation. Several researchers estimate that 36 million people in Bangladesh will be newly pushed into poverty due to COVID-19. Social distancing measures and lockdowns have cut opportunities for work and income, especially in urban areas - leading millions of people to struggle to earn a single meal. Greener cities could provide a solution.

Agricultural production and supply routes are also being disrupted. The demand for fresh food is growing increasingly acute in cities, where adulterated food was already a common problem- nearly half of fresh produce consumed daily are adulterated. The UDP started distribution of vegetable seeds and seedling in May. A total of 7,653 households have received seeds and seedlings across the 20 working cities that will provide them a source of nutrition.



Story from the Ground

"If other government and non-government organizations like BRAC came to the side of unemployed families, their suffering would be alleviated"

*-Hazi Muhammad Abdul Gani
Mayor of Savar Municipality.*

35-year-old Duli Akter lives with her husband and daughter in an informal settlement in Adapara of Savar in the outskirts of Dhaka. She migrated from Daulatpur of Manikganj, central Bangladesh.

Duli is growing a variety of vegetables --- malabar spinach, stem amaranth, beans, and two kinds of gourd. Local community development organisation provided her with four packets of seeds in early May.

"I used to run my own paper packaging business before the lockdown started," says Duli.

"I supported my family and my daughter's education. I was standing on my own feet after having struggled with poverty for so long. The lockdown made me lose my business. I was back to where I started. It was devastating. I struggled to find ways to

feed my daughter. I received emergency cash support worth BDT 1,500 (USD 18) from BRAC during this crisis."

Duli has no security in terms of land tenure. She lives on land owned by local landlords, where she has some space around her home to grow food.

"The local community organisers gave me the seeds a few days after I got my cash support," says Duli.

"They showed me how to sow the seeds properly, the best watering routine for them and their fertilisation. They helped me understand

which vegetables to grow in which season. I saw that it was no problem to grow in the space that I had available. Soon, I was able to add the vegetables in our daily meals."



Amphan Report

Cyclone Amphan hit the Bangladesh coast approximate on 20 May 2020 with a wind speed of 160 km per hour, affecting more than 10 million people in 19 coastal districts. Of the districts, eight were affected moderate to severe by the super cyclone. In the super cyclone 26 people died, 55,767 houses were fully and 205,368 partially damaged, crops of 32,037 hectares lands damaged, and 76 km embankments were damaged.

It preliminary causes damage of crops, shrimp enclosures and other agricultural products, and loss of livestock that increases food insecurity of the affected people, who are already suffering from a livelihood crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lack of safe drinking water and sanitary latrines may cause health hazards by spreading waterborne diseases and the physical distancing in emergency shelters is near to impossible which may increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission.



Story from the ground

Sagira Begum (65) is a resident of Khalishpur Bihari Camp in Khulna. The only bread earner of the 5-member family is her day labor eldest son who lost his work in the pandemic. Sagira Begum sometimes earns money by sewing with needle and thread. They live in a home built in corrugated-tin on government land. Their ancestors came from the Indian state of Bihar and settled there.

On May 20, when cyclone Amphan hit the region, her home was damaged and they were forced to take shelter in a neighbor's house. Amid the plight, BRAC UDP came up with help for Sagira Begum and gave her BDT 5,000 in two installments to repair her home. Sagira Begum with the help of her sons and community people repaired the home to make it habitable.

Like Sagira Begum, BRAC UDP helped 83 households in Khulna and 317 households in Satkhira to repair their damaged homes. After field assessment, the UDP team prioritized the most needy, women-headed and person with disability for the cash support.



Empowering the RMG Workers in Urban Slums of Dhaka

April-June 2020

With increased COVID-19 cases around the world, the country's economy has almost been on pause. The three OSSCs of UDP ERMG project are playing a crucial role to support the poverty stricken communities amid this crisis.

During the April-June 2020 period the ERMG project has been mostly implementing COVID-19 response through its three One STOP Service Center (OSSC). Besides, the 3 OSSCs were operationalized to improve the wellbeing of RMG workers and community people by ensuring ongoing primary health care, legal aid and financial inclusion services and reached nearly 500 programme participants through programmatic interventions. Due to the pandemic, the regular skills training, ECD-cum daycare service, factory level and community level events were postponed. Simultaneously, the project team also continues its

activity through different advocacy works, negotiation with different sector actors and mobilization for the smooth operation of activities and to achieve project goals by using an online platform.

The project has also organized and participated in different seminars, meetings and workshops using different online platforms. Some of the other mention worthy activities are meeting with ILO on the MoU signing on preventing Gender Based Violence at RMG factories and activities during COVID-19 crisis on 13 May, meeting among Porticus, BRAC IED and ERMG project on the effective implementation of play lab and day care on 18 May, Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) forum for RMGs to prepare a guideline of family planning for the RMG workers during COVID-19 and discussion on the progress of forums' activity on 11 June.



Rezvina Parvin receives Sir Fazle Hasan Abed Values Award 2020

Rezvina Parvin from Urban Development Programme is one of the winners of the Sir Fazle Hasan Abed Values Award 2020. Ms. Parvin is working as Manager Field Operations of the ERMG project of UDP. She has been with BRAC for the last 16 years, after completion of MSS in Anthropology from Jahangirnagar University. She started her journey with BRAC Research and Evaluation division then she spent more than a decade with BRAC Advocacy for Social Change Unit before moving to the UDP in 2017. She is an asset to her team and sincere and exceptionally dedicated to BRAC. She has contributed to many research innovations and implemented different challenging programmes with significant levels of success.





BRAC Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding for all

What is safeguarding?

'Safeguarding' refers to the ways of protecting individuals from any kind of misconduct or harassment - such as sexual harassment, oppression, intimidation, humiliation, violence, discrimination, neglect and exploitation.

Who is this policy meant for?



Stakeholders of BRAC's programmes



Partners and donors



BRAC employees and volunteers

Who are most prone to safeguarding risks?



Children



Adolescents



Women

Adults Children with special needs



People with disabilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Healthy habits to help prevent COVID-19



Don't touch your face



Wash your hands often- for at least 20 seconds



Stay home when you're sick



Sneeze/cough into your elbow



Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers



Disinfect objects and surfaces you touch often

BRAC

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