



## Health insurance for RMG workers requires policy support

A network consisting of the Health Economics Unit, Health Services Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka; SNV Netherlands Development Organization, Bangladesh, Gonoshasthaya Kendra, and BRAC UDP jointly arranged a dialogue on 'Policy Framework for Health Insurance of the RMG workers in Bangladesh' on March 14, 2021, at BRAC Centre Inn.

Session speakers stressed the need for affordable and reliable health insurance coverage for RMG workers as out-of-pocket money for healthcare is high in the country. Speakers recommended for sustainable and a manageable premium, increased OPD coverage within insurance packages, sensitization of local service providers and gatekeepers and urged to prepare an operational guideline to streamline the insurance management process across the country.

### ILO-BRAC advocacy and communication campaign launched

A new advocacy and communication campaign, supported by ILO, has been launched to make RMG workers aware of health and hygiene safety amid the pandemic.

Since the inception of the project in January, a pulse survey has been completed, 10 project staff were recruited and oriented, and an inception meeting was arranged, where local government representatives and government officials joined.

### BRAC concludes emergency aid to non-formal RMG workers

Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) supported emergency aid to 750 non-formal (hosiery) RMG worker households and 75 factories in Narayanganj city completed.

A total of BDT 6,750,000 cash support and different protective materials such as masks, PPE, thermometer, face shield, and hygiene kits were distributed among the selected households and factories and its workers in Narayanganj.

### ERMG project activities January-March 2021

- 1258** people got healthcare services
- 690** people enrolled in health insurance
- 388** DPS enrolment reached
- 116** workers received skills training
- 91** skills learners secured jobs
- 156** people get legal aid



## ERMG Annual review planning and learning sharing workshop held

A two-day-long Annual Operational Planning and Learning Sharing workshop was held on 19-20 January 2021 at Uttara BLC. Dr. Md Liakath Ali, Director, Urban Development Programme, inaugurated the workshop, while Associate Director Mohammed Abdus Salam was present in the closing session.

A total of 55 (male 42 and female 13) participants from BRAC internal implementing partners (HNPP, HRLS, SDP, & MF) participated in the workshop. Prof Dr. Hosne Ara Begum, Dean, Faculty of Textile Engineering, BUTEX, conducted a session on “4th Industrial revolution in RMG sector of Bangladesh & its implication.”

Mahfuzur Rahman, Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment (DIFE) shared the Role of Govt. to ensure compliance and wellbeing in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

## Pinjira settles family dispute thru Savar OSSC

Married to Osman Gani in 2015, *Pinjira Begum* gave in to the continuous physical and mental torture by her husband. Residing at an informal settlement in Rajabari, Savar, Pinjira earns her living working in a garment factory. Not only was Pinjira suffering domestic violence, but also their 2-year-old daughter Mariam was deprived of the father's support and care as Osman was married before marrying Pinjira.

Being informed of his deception, and heedless demeanor to the family, Pinjira was seeking an option to settle their volatile relationship. From a television advertisement aired on a local channel,

Pinjira came to know about the legal aid support service rendered by the One-Stop Service Centre.

Later, She filed a complaint against Osman in the Savar OSSC, who went back to his previous family recently. The OSSC extended its legal aid support to Pinjira to settle the family dispute. In response to legal steps against Osman, his father Mintu Hossain, OSSC legal official, and other local dignitaries involved in the Alternative Dispute Resolution process. Based on the decision undertaken in the meeting, Pinjira divorced Osman Gani, secured BDT 60,000 as dower and the legal right of her daughter's guardianship.

## Training on labour rights and wellbeing of RMG workers held

Training on labour rights and wellbeing of RMG workers was held in Tongi on 10 March 2021 in presence of 45 (39 male and 6 female) participants from Gazipur City Corporation (GCC), industrial police, local government representatives, NGOs, and local leaders.

The Chief Executive Officer of GCC was present as the chief guest and the Assistant Director of the Department of Labour Welfare was the facilitator of the training session. The rights and well-being of RMG workers in light of the labour law were discussed.

Participants have mentioned challenges, gaps, and obstacles to implementing the law and are committed to overcoming multi-dimensional challenges for the wellbeing of RMG workers.





## Urban Agriculture changes Muslima's life

Muslima Begum was living with poverty from the very beginning of her life. Muslima lives in Tarorath area under Ward number 24 of Sylhet City Corporation. She is a member of the primary group of Jamuna CDO, as a part of BRAC-Urban Development Program.

Muslima Begum worked as a housemaid and her husband worked as a vegetable seller. She and her family live in poverty with their limited income. As a member of Jamuna CDO, she got Usha gourd, red spinach and spinach seed support from BRAC-Urban Development Programme as vegetable seed support in 2020.

Due to the lack of space, she cultivated the seeds in an abandoned place next to the colony. She planted the seeds and took care of this plant. A few months later, her plant of Usha gourd, red spinach and spinach began to bear fruit.

Muslima said, "By planting the Usha gourd, red spinach and spinach seeds from BRAC-UDP, I got 200 gourds, a lot of spinach and also sold it to the wholesale market, local market and neighbour for a total BDT 10,000. With the money I got from selling the vegetables, I bought a van and rented it for BDT 300 a day.

I can run the daily expenses of my family as well as buy things which I need with this money. I have also given some gourds and spinach to my neighbors free of cost.

BRAC-UDP has given me those seed's to meet the nutritional needs of my family as well as the household expenses. I am grateful to BRAC-UDP for helping me and my family by providing the vegetables support. "

Like Muslima, 6672 households have been supported with seeds and seedlings of different varieties of vegetables in 20 working cities and towns during January to March quarter.

## Support to prevent dropout



A total of 2,854 school going children living in urban low-income communities were encouraged to continue education amid pandemic. Education materials, including writing pad, pen, pencils, scale and a backpack were provided.

## Housing improvement continues



UDP provided technical and financial support to construct 38 low-cost climate-resilient houses in Rangpur, Satkhira, Faridpur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, Cox's Bazar and Savar between January and March 2021.



## Economic recovery initiatives

UDP identified the people most affected by the pandemic and provided with livelihood support across the working areas. During this period, 69 households received livelihood support.

## Capacity building

During this quarter, 71 UDP staff received training on Supportive Supervision, Monitoring and Implementation and 19 on Team Management. 39 safeguarding champions virtually attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Safeguarding Champion's Meeting. Besides, 2554 CDO leaders, staff, community organizers participated 16 types of trainings, including enterprise development training, fire safety training, primary healthcare, and safeguarding training.



## Planning workshop



The Annual Review, Planning and Learning-Sharing Workshop were held in Faridpur, Dinajpur and Cumilla BRAC Learning Centre, where all regional staff participated.

AOP workshop held on 14-15 February at Faridpur BLC



AOP workshop held on 23-24 February at Dinajpur BLC



AOP workshop held on 02-03 March at Cumilla BLC



## Water crisis at Mofijabad community in Cumilla solved

Bangladesh has made significant progress regarding universal access to improved water sources. However, access to safe drinking water is still elusive and only 34.6 percent people have the access, while more than 41 per cent drink contaminated water.

**UDP provides mini-piped water supply:** BRAC UDP promotes community-led service solutions, social enterprise approaches and public-private-community partnership for pro-poor urban development. Community based pipe water supply initiative is proved most efficient and self sustaining model. Demand for this water supply model is increasing and UDP team now became expert in providing technical support in designing and constructing in lowest cost.

Mofijabad colony of Cumilla City Corporation is one of the urban colonies, where 311 cramped households were suffering acute scarcity of water for drinking, washing cloth, bathing and other household uses almost round the clock . They are provided with water at a particular time in a day. Mofizabad Community Development Organization and BRAC Urban Development Programme have taken initiative to solve the safe water crisis in the neighbourhood The CDO setup overhead water tank and pipe connection to 60 households. The committee prepares water bills for every household based on their water uses and collects the water bill. The initiative has solved the community's long-hyped problem of water scarcity.

## Infrastructure development underway

BRAC Urban Development Programme has continued different infrastructural development works amid the second surge of pandemic maintaining all social distance and health safety guidance.

We adopt strategic plans for infrastructure development for this year by attending three different annual planning workshops. As per planning, 425 feet drain with footpath at Chattogram, 346 feet footpath at Faridpur, two safe drinking water options at Rajshahi and Sylhet and one toilet at Khulna have been implemented.

The construction work of Razzak Park Public Toilet in Satkhira is already completed and ready to be inaugurated. Construction safety tools and personal safety equipment like musk, hand sanitizer, hand washing, hand gloves were provided to the workers for ensuring maximum safety.





## Sustainable street vendor management project starts

Street vending is a major livelihood option for the urban people of Dhaka. Around 2.5 lakh hawkers run business on the capital's footpaths, though the number varies with seasons, day of week and time. Middle to lower income people usually buy their necessities from street vendors at cheaper prices, and around two percent of city dwellers' livelihood are directly dependent on street vending.

Though the street vendors are playing a vital role in city economy, creating employment, offering quick shopping and saving time for city dwellers, they are always in threat of eviction as there are no legal or policy safeguard for them, and as they are, in many cases, creating glitches in urban public spaces. In this backdrop, BRAC UDP with the support of Dhaka North City Corporation has started a Sustainable Street Vendor Management project in order to develop potential directives that may be

put in to regulate the street vending operations for the greater good of the city dwellers. The project objectives are:

- Understanding the current context of street vending opportunities and challenges
- Explore and test some prospects/options for formalizing the street vending
- Advocacy for street vending policy formulation at national level

## Improving the wellbeing of waste workers in Dhaka

BRAC Urban Development Programme has become the implementation partner of The Coca Cola Foundation supported livelihood aid to the waste workers in Dhaka metropolitan since January 2021.

The pilot project offers a tailored service package including WASH facilities, awareness raising on health and hygiene practice, financial literacy and basic literacy among 3500 waste workers and their families. Field screening and mapping has been completed to identify concentration of waste workers in 24 urban low-income communities under the Dhaka North and South city corporations, work diversity among the waste workers, categories of their work and find suitable places for establishing five community service centers.

A survey has been conducted after field screening and mapping to identify waste workers in the slums and consider them as the project participants.



## COVID-19: UDP activities in numbers



**1,856,522**  
programme  
participants  
oriented on  
COVID-19



**86,294**  
households  
received  
cash support



**45,140**  
households  
received food  
packages



**247,000**  
leaflets,  
stickers  
distributed



**358,000**  
soaps  
provided



**164**  
hand washing  
facilities  
installed

### Urban Food Assistance project continues cash support



World Food Programme supported Urban Food Assistance since August 2020 has been providing BDT 3000 to 7500 households living in Kalyanpur and Sattala informal settlements in Dhaka. The project participants were also sensitized to purchase nutritious food involving digital money transfer service and QR card from the designated 20 shops and others in the areas. Around 93% of the participants have purchased vegetables and nutritious food items from the shops January to March 2021.

Upon spending money for purchasing diverse foods the project participants are subject to receive 25% cash back in the next month. A cumulative number of 6,622 (88%) participants have received cash back for the month of January and March 2021.

Besides, 107 safety net participants (pregnant and lactating women, persons with disabilities, aged and widowed) have received cash entitlements.

To subdue the COVID-19 in the community, the project has so far distributed 300,000 reusable masks and of those 2861 masks were distributed in the quarter. To ensure hand washing practice of the community people, 2700 soaps, 90 hand rubs were distributed. The project staff also worked to raise awareness on diversity, proper hand washing, bKash fraud awareness through disseminating 7869 flyers and 1220 posters.

### ARISE Responsive Fund works to tackle COVID-19 impact in LIC

ARISE Responsive Fund provides services to marginalized and overlooked informal urban settlements to ensure that their basic health and hygiene needs.

To provide people with the knowledge of public health emergencies, 30 primary group meetings and 3 community development organisation meetings were held, where around 2500 people were made aware of health and hygiene.

Vaccine registration booths had been installed at Khulna and Rajshahi, and 227 people were registered with the designated government website.

Two capacity building trainings on public health emergencies were arranged in Khulna and Rajshahi. Through the training, 75 CDO and ward committee leaders learnt their roles during the health emergency.

Under the project, 12 hand washing facilities have been installed in Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi low-income communities. Besides, 25,000 reusable masks, and 6,000 soaps and washing powder were distributed among 3000 households.

To provide community health services, two health camps were arranged where 500 people received free health checkups, free medicines, including menstrual hygiene commodities.





## IRP Health provides basic healthcare thru 4 centers

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in response to scarcity of primary healthcare for marginal population, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) supported Integrated Rehabilitation Programme for Health Services (IRPH) has started healthcare service delivery in three Urban Healthcare and Diagnostic centres situated at Mirpur, Mohammadpur and Saidpur.

A total of 3,146 out patients have been provided with different healthcare services, among them 123 received eye care services since January. The IRP Health has employed several programme organisers to raise health awareness and to establish a referral linkage between the community and hospitals.



Since January 2021 several meetings were organised with different departments of government for coordination with the respective Ward councillors and zonal officers of Dhaka North City Corporation and Saidpur Municipality. To inform the project, a meeting was organised on 18 January 2021 where high city officials were present.

The project team has started networking and building rapport with different community groups, religious leaders, social leaders, teachers and other relevant stakeholders. Since inception, 252 PG, 28 CDO and 16 community action plans have been formed till March'21. A two-day-long staff orientation held on 15-16 February 2021 at Gulshan BLC.

## IRP WASH to provide basic services

Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) supported Integrated Rehabilitation Programme for WASH Services (IRPW) aim to improve the living standard of people living in urban poverty. Till March, the IRPW team has installed 30 hand washing facilities at key locations of the communities to ensure proper hand washing behaviour. We ensure availability of running water, soap and drainage facilities.

Under the project, a five-day-long residential foundation training for the project staff arranged at Uttara BLC, Dhaka, where Dr. Md Liakath Ali, Director of UDP and CCP, BRAC and Masud Ahmad, programme head (acting) outlined the imperativeness of the project.

To build rapport with local stakeholders, in February the IRPW team met with some Ward councilors of Dhaka North City Corporation in February. All of the councilors expressed their interest to work with BRAC for ensuring basic WASH services in the communities.

On 15 March, a meeting was organised among the KAAP partner NGOs: BRAC, MuslimAid UK Bangladesh and Dhaka Ahsania Mission. Engr. Sufee Mushtaque Ahmed, Country Coordinator of PCO-KAAP, inaugurated the meeting, while Mohammed Abdus Salam, Associate Director of UDP, BRAC emphasized to strengthen collaboration among partners at field level to deliver services under one umbrella.





## International Women's Day 2021 observed

BRAC Urban Development Programme (UDP), Climate Change Programme (CCP) and Climate Bridge Fund (CBF) on 8 March 2021 jointly organised a floor discussion to mark International Women's Day 2021 at BRAC Head Office.

BRAC's proposed theme for celebrating the day was "Work, Leadership, and Family: Equality between Men and Women." Around 70 staff of the programmes participated in the floor discussion. Globally the day is celebrated following the theme "Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world."

The hour-long session included a floor discussion which intended to create awareness and raise consciousness among HO and field staff on men-women equality in the workplace,

leadership and family and gender sensitivity and how BRAC can set a significant example on pursuing women in the leadership position in every sector of its operations.

Dr Md Liakath Ali, Director of Climate Change Programme, BRAC and BRAC International, and Urban Development Programme, BRAC inaugurated the discussion. Mafruha Alam, Manager (Capacity Development) and Gender Focal, UDP facilitated the discussion while UDP Associate Director Mohammed Abdus Salam and UDP, CCP and CBF senior management were also present.

Besides, all the CDOs, CDFs and regional offices marked the day by organising discussion, rally and participating in different events.



Narayanganj UDP team pledge to prevent VAWC



UDP arranges rally in Satkhira



**World Tuberculosis Day:** The IRP Health team celebrated World Tuberculosis (TB) Day on March 24 with the theme 'The Clock is Ticking' in collaboration with national TB Control programme and DGHS to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB.

**World Water Day:** The IRP WASH team in Mirpur, Mohammadpur of Dhaka and Saidpur of Nilphamari on 22 March observed World Water Day 2021 with the theme 'Valuing Water' that extends beyond issues of price and include environmental, social, and cultural value people place on water.



হাঁচি, কাশি বা কথা বলার সময় মানুষের নাক বা মুখ থেকে যে ড্রপলেটস বা জলীয় কণা বের হয়, তাতে ভাইরাস থাকতে পারে।



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একজনের থেকে অন্যজন দুই হাত দূরে থাকা

**Advisors**

Dr Md Liakath Ali  
Mohammed Abdus Salam

**Editor**

Md Abdullah Al Zobair

**Design**

UDP Communication

**Email:** udp.communication@brac.net

**BRAC**

BRAC Centre  
75 Mohakhali  
Dhaka 1212  
Bangladesh

T: +88 02 2222 81265

F: +99 02 2222 63542

E: info@brac.net

W: www.brac.net

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