



The Humanitarian

BRAC Humanitarian Programme

Quarterly Newsletter

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 **brac**
বন্যায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত জনগোষ্ঠীর জীবিকায়ন পুনর্বাসন ও
বিশ্বদায়িত্ব গ্রহণ
ঘরের ভিটা উচুকরণ
ইউনিয়ন: হাটশেরপুর II ওয়ার্ড নং-০৮
সারিয়াকান্দি, বগুড়া।
বাস্তবায়নে: ব্র্যাক হিউম্যানিটারিয়ান প্রোগ্রাম



Roundtable Discussion: Earthquake risk and preparedness in Bangladesh

BRAC Humanitarian Programme organised a roundtable discussion on the emerging issue of “Earthquake Risk and Preparedness in Bangladesh”. In partnership with the national newspaper Kaler Kantho, this event was held at the conference room of East West Media Group office at Bashundhara residential area in Dhaka on 16 June 2021.

The main purpose of this discussion was to facilitate a participatory dialogue with multi-stakeholders to acknowledge the earthquake risk and urgent needs of preparedness and increase the awareness at both institutional and community level as well as to strengthen the coordination and collaboration among the relevant stakeholders in order to reduce impacts on the lives and properties in the country.

State Minister for Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), Dr Enamur Rahman, graced the event as the chief guest. Mr. Sajedul Hasan, Director of Humanitarian Programme, BRAC and BRAC International delivered the welcome and closing speeches. The discussion was moderated by renowned novelist Mr. Imdadul Haq Milan, Editor, Kaler Kantho.

Through an interactive discussion, the panelists acknowledged urgent needs to strengthen the capacity and preparedness, and increase the awareness at all levels, and came up with a set of recommendations to reduce the earthquake risk in Bangladesh and its associated impacts on the lives and properties. State Minister Dr. Enamur Rahman said that Bangladesh needs 50 years to be an earthquake-resilient country and the government is working with Japan government to develop and implement the plan. He added that the government has allocated BDT 2,300 crore for disaster management in which earthquake preparedness and capacity building will get priority.

Mr. Md. Mohsin, Secretary of MoDMR; Prof. Dr. A.S.M Maksud Kamal, Pro-Vice Chancellor of University of Dhaka; Brigadier General Mohammad Sajjad Hussain, Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defense; Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed, Director of Bangladesh Meteorological Department; Dr. Rowshan Ara Begum, Professor, Bangladesh University of Health Sciences; Md. Khurshid Alam, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh; Ms. Dilruba Haider, Programme Specialist, UN Women Bangladesh; Dr. Tahmeed Malik Al-Hussaini, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, BUET; Mohammad Abdul Qayyum, Retired Additional Secretary, and Ex-National Project Director, Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP II); and Ms. Sabina Yeasmin, Deputy Director and Programme Manager, BDRCS also participated in the discussion as distinguished panelists. The key discussion and recommendations were telecasted and published in several popular national electronic and print media, online news portal and FM radio. A news supplement of the discussion was also published in Kaler Kantho.



New home for new hopes: 8 years since the Rana Plaza tragedy

Many survivors of the Rana Plaza tragedy are still living with several economic and social challenges along with their physical disability. BRAC through its Humanitarian Programme has provided new houses to five survivors. The inauguration and handover of two of these new houses in Dinajpur district took place on 24 April 2021 commemorating the 8th anniversary of the tragic event. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dinajpur, Mr. Khaled Mohammad Zaki, graced virtual key handover ceremony. The Upazila Nirbahi Officers of Fulbari and Ghoraghat upazila were also present at the site of the new houses to celebrate the occasion. The survivors, who received the houses are amputees or are now living with different kinds of physical disabilities. Later, three more houses were handed over to the survivors throughout May and June 2021. Bogura’s DC, Md. Ziaul Hoque, inaugurated the ceremony virtually, the Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Ms. Shifa Nusrat, and the Upazila Chairman, Rezaul Ashraf Jinnah, directly handed over the house key to Sobura on 11 May 2021. The DC of Lalmonirhat, Md. Abu Zafor, and the Upzila Nirbahi Officer, Md. Abdul Mannan, presented the house to Sujon Mia on 15 June 2021. On 22 June 2021, the DC of Rangpur, Md. Asif Ahasan, handed over the house to Bilashi and her family in their new house premise. The houses are designed in such a way that fit their needs including the accessibility, and movement needed in the toilet and kitchen. The [design](#) and construction of houses are also integrated with natural disaster resilient features depending on their location and vulnerability. BRAC’s Construction Department designed the houses and worked closely with the Humanitarian Programme to address the disabilities of project participants. BHP will provide a total of 19 houses to support the survivors who continue to live with high levels of disabilities since the tragedy. Since 2014, BRAC has supported [780 survivors](#) with medical assistance, livelihood and economic reintegration and psychosocial counselling.

Lesson learned from the Rana Plaza tragedy: Special TV Talk show

On 24 April 2021, marking the 8th anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy, BHP arranged a special talk show which was aired on Jamuna Television. BRAC’s experiences and lessons learned over the past eight years of assisting 780 survivors through a holistic humanitarian support that included medical, psychosocial, economic, livelihood reintegration and housing was discussed in the talk show. The panelists showcased the challenges and best practices that evolved while extending assistances to the victims of this unique industrial accident. The outstanding panelists included Mr. Md. Mohsin, Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief; Mr. Faruque Hassan, President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association; Ms. Jenefa Jabbar, Director HRLS, Social Compliance and Safeguarding, BRAC; and Dr Kaosar Afsana, Professor of BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University. The show also discussed the findings from a recent research conducted to assess the current situations of the survivors.

BHP has successfully completed its Rehabilitation of Livelihood and Vulnerability Eradication (RELIVE) project. RELIVE project was an early recovery initiative of BRAC, which was implemented to strengthen the resilience of 1,000 most vulnerable households in Sariakandi sub-district of Bogura district in Bangladesh - one of the worst affected area by the 2020 monsoon flood. The project comprised of the provision for improvement of food security and livelihood, family shelters, safe drinking water, agriculture inputs and hygiene promotion including awareness raising on COVID-19 safety measures. The Project was implemented during January-June 2021 with the funding support from Cartier Philanthropy through BRAC UK. It has reached significant milestones in delivering essential services; resources and information to the flood affected families and has established a solid foundation for strengthening resilience to floods, helping communities move towards a sustainable future.

RELIVE: Strengthening Community Resilience to Flood



Fire at Sattola Slum again: the lessons of a humanitarian

- Bayezid Bostami

A humanitarian responder must take up immense challenges in an urban setting. Some of the challenges are amplified in slums. BHP staff and district disaster management team members have observed some of these phenomena over and over again.

Informal settlers frequently migrate from one slum to another. There is very little documentation and record of their movement, household, and members. When emergency responses are rolled out in slums, it is difficult to quickly collect data on how many people are in a family and how many households live under a single roof. To add to this challenge, previous residents of the slum come forward and claim to be enlisted for assistance. In a fire burnt scenario, verifying their settlement can be very difficult and time consuming.

House owners that rent out multiple rooms to multiple families under their shelters, also claim that more families were living under their shelter. In this way, they try to take emergency support in the name of more people against their names.



Slums are cramped and when everything burns down due to fire, a space constraint arises. To humanitarian responders, it becomes an added difficulty to organise relief distribution in this congested setting. More spaces are needed to be cleared for smooth relief delivery to the people who need the assistance at the earliest.

BRAC addresses these challenges by keeping close coordination with the communities and local government. We overcome the transparency challenges in household counts by speaking to community leaders and the affected family members themselves. While preventive measures for fire are the best solutions, we also need to instill a

transparent housing facility within the slums.

As a member of BRAC's emergency response team, above are my learnings from being at the frontline of BRAC's response to the massive fire that broke out around 3:50AM on 7 June 2021 in the capital's Sattola Bostee (slum) at Mohakhali. According to the Fire Service and Civil Defense (FSCD) control room, the fire was finally put out at 6:35AM by engaging a total of 18 firefighting units. Residents of the slum were able to save little or none of their assets and household items since the fire spread very quickly.

Immediately after the fire was put out, BRAC's District Disaster Management Team conducted a rapid damage and need assessment and found that although there were no casualties reported, approximately 500 shanties were completely burnt down, and 720 households lost their belongings. Among the affected family members, there were pregnant women and lactating mothers, with children as young as two months.

Based on the needs identified after the fire outbreak and coordination with government and non-government responders, BRAC provided following most urgent humanitarian support to the victims:

- Non-food Items (NFIs) boxes were given to 720 households (a bucket, one cooking spatula, three cooking pots of different sizes and shapes, two spoons, three glasses, a plastic mug, a steel bowl, and four melamine plates). Among them, 475 were women, 228 were men, and 17 were persons with disabilities.
- Cash support to 26 women (pregnant women and lactating mothers); BDT 1,000 was provided to each family so that they can purchase essential items during this critical stage.
- Urban development programme distributed high energy biscuits to 720 households

BHP's early actions on floods contribute to promptly saving lives and reducing potential losses from hazards. Prepositioning of essential Non-food Items (NFI) for relief distribution before any disaster strikes helps to curb any delay in reaching affected population, and supporting them with meeting their essential needs during crisis. BHP has already prepositioned 500 non-food relief items at a regional warehouse in Sherpur, Bogura which will be dispatched to as many flood-affected families when and if needs arise

Prepositioning for flood: Ready to reach people in need



Launch of the Gender Marker

Gender equality and inclusion in humanitarian intervention is one of the key priorities of BHP. In May 2021, BHP launched the Gender Marker, a monitoring and accountability tool designed to track the degree of gender equality in its programmatic activities. The Gender Marker was developed in consultation with BRAC's Gender Justice and Diversity Programme and other organisations that have already successfully implemented similar marker tools for gender. The marker will guide BHP and other BRAC programmes toward achieving the goal of establishing gender equality, disability, and inclusion into the foundations of its work in a structured and sustainable way. ([Read the Gender Marker here](#))

BHP in the media

Earthquake Preparedness Animated Video: Heroic Children

As a part of the "Crisis within Crisis" animation series, BHP has released a video on earthquake preparedness. The video takes close look at household level preparedness measures that are needed and how family members, including children, can be their own family hero. The video was released within days after the recent Sylhet tremors with integrated messages regarding COVID-19 preventive health measures. ([Watch the video here](#)).



Special TV talk show on "Lessons learned from the Rana Plaza tragedy."

[Click below to watch the full show aired on Jamuna Television](#)



Rana Plaza tragedy 8th anniversary commemoration: Inauguration of houses for Rana Plaza tragedy survivors

[Click here to read an article published on The Daily Star](#)



Roundtable Discussion: Earthquake risk and preparedness in Bangladesh

[Click here to read the full discussion published on Kaler Kantho](#)

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Click on the channels below to watch the news coverage



news24

BRAC Humanitarian Programme is focused on building resilience across vulnerable communities and provides holistic humanitarian support to the people affected by both natural and human induced disasters, by working alongside government and other humanitarian actors.

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