

## **Rising up**

Md Farid Mia, 48, is one of the members of Abul Kashem's organisation, *Modhho Badda Durjoy Protibondhi Unnoyon Shangstha*. Farid Mia contracted typhoid at an early age and became paralysed in both his legs. His parents could not afford the cost of his treatment and he was unable to pursue his education at school due to his lack of mobility, as well as the social stigma he faced when he went out. He was highly dependent on his family and relied on their help for the smallest tasks. When he moved to Dhaka with his family for a better livelihood, he was forced to beg for a living as no one would employ him.

Farid Mia did not want to live as a beggar. When he came across Abul Kashem's informal community group, he immediately wanted to be involved in its activities. Through active participation, he learned about livelihood training and opportunities. With help from the Social Welfare Department of Bangladesh, Farid Mia bought a three-wheeled cart, which he converted into a tea stall and drives through his hand. He also sells food products such as bread, cakes and chocolates. Following in the footsteps of Abul Kashem, Farid Mia also took out a loan from BRAC's 'engaging people with disabilities' project, in 2013, with which he expanded his inventory.

Farid Mia looks forward to the day when he can set up a store beside his home so that he wouldn't have to travel far in his wheelchair. He is grateful for the support he received from BRAC, and the broader community, when he needed it most.