Barisal, the Venice of Bengal, set on the famous river Kirtankhola, is located in the south-central of Bangladesh. It lies under Barisal division, and has an area of 2,784 square kilometres. As a major rice production hub in the country, it produces the famous Balam (basmati) rice at a very large scale. As this city is located near the coast, it is well known for producing fish and coconut on a large scale.

There are several rivers flowing into the city e.g., Arial Khan, Katcha, Tentulia, Naya Bhanga, Jayanti, Shwarupkathi and Amtali. Barisal is the second largest river port in Bangladesh. BRAC operates various programmes in Barisal, such as microfinance, targeting the ultra poor (TUP), health, nutrition and population (HNPP), education (BEP), community empowerment (CEP), human rights and legal aid services (HRLS), and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme. Among them, microfinance offers three types of loans – dabi (microloan), progoti (enterprise loan) and agricultural loans such as – tenant farmers’ development project (BCUP) to the clients. HNPP provides health education through health volunteers (shasthya shebika) and health workers (shasthya kormi). BEP identifies children from marginalised families and provides basic education through its informal schools. TUP focuses on tackling extreme poverty in multiple fronts. HRLS serves the disadvantaged community through its human rights and legal education (HRLE) shebikas. CEP is building and strengthening community institutions to ensure socio political empowerment to poor women. WASH is working on ensuring safe drinking water and basic sanitation for rural people. A BRAC learning centre (BLC) was also established in Barisal. The BLC is a residential centre used as a training centre for BRAC employees.

General information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
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<td>Sub-districts</td>
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<td>Unions</td>
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<td>Villages</td>
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<td>Children (0-15)</td>
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<td>Primary schools</td>
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<td>Hospitals</td>
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<td>Banks</td>
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<td>Bazaars</td>
<td>152</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children attend a BRAC pre primary school in a rural village.

Photo credit: BRAC/Shahidul Alam Noorani
### At a glance

**Microfinance**
- Branches: 29
- Village organisations: 2,482
- Members: 67,395
- Borrowers: 54,973

**Progoti**
- Small enterprise clients: 5,346

**Tenant farmers’ development project**
- Village organisations: 41
- Population covered: 4,350
- Amount of money disbursed: 31,007,000

**Health, nutrition and population**
- Health volunteers (*shasthya shebika*): 1,485
- Health workers (*shasthya kormi*): 187
- Health centres: 18

**Targeting the ultra poor**
- Specially targeted ultra poor (STUP) member: 592
- Other targeted ultra poor (OTUP) members: 740
- Asset and training received: 592
- Health care availed: 450
- Soft loan received: 700

### Community empowerment

**Community-based organisation** (*poli shomaj*): 168
**Popular theatre team**: 7
**Human rights violation cases reported**: 211

### Education

- Pre-primary schools: 95
- Primary schools: 75
- Shishu niketon schools: 25
- Adolescent development programme (ADP) Centres: 95

### Human rights and legal aid services

- Human rights and legal education (*HRLE*) shebikas: 296
- HRLE graduates: 1,400
- Legal aid clinics: 10

### Skills development

- Number of master craft persons (MCPs): 51
- Number of trades: 6
- Number of learners: 105

### Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Committee members: 19,272
- Sanitation coverage: 62%
- Loans for sanitary latrines: 118
- Deep tubewells installed: 115