



BRAC's Emergency Response History in Bangladesh

Over the past 50 years, BRAC has achieved significant milestones in responding to natural calamities in Bangladesh. Our journey began in 1972 with humanitarian work under the banner of the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee where we supported war-ravaged populations following the Liberation War of 1971. Emerging from the need to address disaster management more proactively and structurally, BRAC established a dedicated programme in 2008, called the Disaster Environment and Climate Change Programme, which was renamed as the Disaster Management and Climate Change in 2015. In 2018, the programme became the BRAC Humanitarian Programme (BHP). BHP works alongside the government, non-governmental organisations and communities across Bangladesh to strengthen resilience and responds holistically to the effects of natural and human induced disasters. Our dynamic regional field teams, robust resources, profound grassroots stakeholder engagement and unique adaptability to address emerging needs, has with time made us a leader in delivering timely, effective and quality-driven emergency response and recovery interventions. Here's our story through action over the years.

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1972 Post Liberation War Rehabilitation

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1974 Famine

To address the lack of food and nutrition among the population, BRAC began a providing emergency support through a camp that distributed cooked food for over four months. Specially cooked hotchpotch (rice and lentils) were distributed to famished families to replenish malnourished people in Kurigram and Jamalpur districts.

1988 Flood

During the floods of 1988, BRAC staff with area officers and field camps were engaged in:

Oral Rehydration Therapy to curb the diarrhoeal epidemics that followed. They distributed approximately 1,000,000 pieces of saline packets.

Health education for awareness raising by message dissemination through miking and leaflet and posters

Emergency feeding stations to provide cooked food to stranded villagers (hand-made roti bread, and molasses)

Food support were ensured through women-led Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) in coordination with local government

Emergency health care service through health team that supplied water purification tablets, oral saline, and treatment of diarrheal diseases and skin disease etc.

Supplied housing, and also distributed clothes, and other emergency supplies.

As soon as the flood water receded:

BRAC schools were repaired

Repaired, installed, and disinfected WaSH facilities such as tube-wells with new concrete platforms. New pit latrines were provided to households.

Community-based infrastructure, and public works programmes were initiated to create employment opportunities.

Fresh loans were provided to BRAC Microfinance (MF) participants.

Post-flood rehabilitation programmes included house repairing and reconstruction, housing loans, asset loans and free poultry sheds were also established.

1989 Tornado

In Satura of Manikganj district, the tornado affected households were supported through house repairing, cash, food, and medical support.

1989 Drought

During the severe drought in 1989, BRAC steered the Food-for-Work programme on employment schemes for its Village Development Committee members.

1991 Cyclone Gorky

After this deadliest tropical cyclones on record, BRAC operated an extensive emergency relief programme following the 1991 cyclone after it made landfall in the southeastern district of Chattogram in April. The tropical cyclone caused at least 138,866 deaths and about US\$1.7 billion (1991 USD) in damage. We supported affected populations through

- Emergency food support of dry food and other non-food items. The food packages for vulnerable families included rice, pulse, edible oil, wheat, baby food including milk and protein biscuits
- Cleaning of houses and approach roads by disposal of garbage & saline water, pond dewatering, derbies removal from house and courtyard
 - BRAC participated in disposal of dead bodies and livestock.
- Medical support through medical team who ensured treatment of minor injuries, illness, diarrheal diseases and general treatment
- Temporary shelter distribution of plastic sheets, nylon rope and hard cash for those who took shelter on the roadside and other public places, and livestock dead body disposed.
 - Clothing distribution
- Water and sanitation services through tube-well disinfection, deep-tube well and latrine installation and repairing at households and community

1991 Cyclone Gorky

BRAC also executed the following activities for long term rehabilitative impacts:

- Conducted a three-month long cash-for-work programme, provided short-term employment, income-generating activities, food security, education and WASH support.
- BRAC constructed 36 multi-purpose cyclone shelters in six coastal districts;f Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Bhola, Bagerhat, Barguna and Patuakhali.
- Approximately 31,000 households were assisted in the survival relief stage and 25,000 in the rehabilitation stages through 400 frontline staff.

1998 Flood

BRAC began a massive relief operation for marooned people to help them cope with the situation created by flood. After the flood, we undertook a comprehensive programme to restore homesteads, rehabilitate agriculture, create employment, prevent epidemics of diseases, and provide nutritional support to pregnant women and children. BRAC schools were repaired, new latrines were built including community infrastructure, and public works programmes were initiated to create employment opportunities. BRAC also rescheduled loan payments and provided fresh loans, allowing microfinance borrowers to withdraw up to 50% of their savings.

2004 Flood

In July, northeastern and northwestern regions of Bangladesh were inundated due to heavy torrential rain which led to raging waters levels. The flood that followed claimed 18 lives and affected the lives of over 6.3 million people. Over 38,000 people were displaced and took refuge in 129 temporary flood shelters. Agricultural land was sub-merged, and 50,000 homes were completely damaged. BRAC provided aid to the affected people in both rural and urban areas across 15 districts. This included:

- Relief packages for 100,000 households that contained hygiene kits, agricultural seeds, and essential food for makeshift kitchens. Other rations such as roti (flattened bread), flattened rice, molasses, puffed rice, rice, lentils, biscuits, milk for children, bleaching powder, alum, water purifying tablets, and oral rehydration sachet packets. BRAC also assisted with tube well washing, repairing, and cleaning, as well as latrine reconstructions.
- Treatment and medicine were provided for 70,856 people.
- BRAC undertook a Flood Rehabilitation Programme to restore livelihoods of the affected people by distributing loans to survivors, creating income generating options and rebuilding their homes.

2007 Cyclone SIDR

Extremely Severe Cyclone Sidr made landfall in Bangladesh in November 2007, causing large-scale evacuations and at least 3,447 deaths. We responded with relief, recovery, and rehabilitation efforts in 30 sub-districts of nine of the most affected districts in coastal region of Bangladesh through

- Emergency dry food package distribution to over 185,000 families.
 - Dry food: 33,274 packets,
 - Food basket: 151,195 HHs,
- Baby food: 56,897 packages including milk, biscuit and chocolates.
- Blankets and clothes distribution among nearly 161,000 households.
- Ensuring safe drinking for over 79,500 HHs by providing water purification tablets
 - Deployment of 15 medical teams who treated 37,000 households.
- Provisioning safe sanitation facilities for almost 22,000 households.
 - Wheelchairs were provided to persons with disabilities

2007 Cyclone SIDR

- Installation of 200 deep tube wells so that communities have access to safe water sources. Existing tube-wells were disinfected, pond sand filters were set up and awareness messages were disseminated to prevent disease breakouts.
- Nearly 21,500 sanitary latrines were constructed and almost 2,500 ponds were de-salinised. Additionally, 513 filters were constructed or repaired to ensure safe water sources for affected communities.

- Education materials were provided

Medical support were provided through medical team who ensured treatment of minor injuries, illness, diarrheal diseases, general treatment.

- Nutrition supplements distributed among approximately 85,000 families focusing on child, pregnant, and lactating mothers.
- For livelihood rehabilitations, 14 rickshaw-vans were given to wives/mothers of rickshaw-van pullers via Cash for Work scheme.

2007 Cyclone SIDR

- - Altogether 1,302 new houses were built, and 2, 645 houses were repaired.
- To revive agricultural activities, seeds, fertilisers and tillage services were provided for land preparation to more than 119,000 farmers. For irrigation, farmers received BDT 5,000 per acre.
- BRAC constructed 17 cyclone shelters in the coastal area following Cyclone SIDR
- Cash for work activities were initiated for 208,262 person-days through which road were repairing and cleaned, ponds were cleaned, school playgrounds, and homestead plinths were raised.

2009 Cyclone Aila

Severe Cyclonic Storm Aila hit the southwestern coast of Bangladesh in 25 May 2009. The storm was responsible for at least 339 deaths across Bangladesh and India. More than 100,000 people were left homeless. Health officials in Bangladesh confirmed a deadly outbreak of diarrhoea on 29 May, with more than 7,000 people infected and four deaths. We responded to this crisis through the efforts of:

- Water and food support such as flattened rice, rice and molasses, to people who took refuge at BRAC offices and cyclone shelters.
 - Constructing 2,400 latrines on high ground and embankments in cyclone-ravaged areas.
- Awareness raising among communities on live saving public health messages, including nutrition, water and sanitation, diarrhoea preventions and skin disease
- Drinking water ensured for 191,259 HHs by transporting through truck and boats, set up rainwater harvesting, excavation of pond, setting up deep tube well, and setting up desalination plants.
- Agricultural support including saline tolerance HYV rice and vegetables and other agricultural inputs were provided to farmers
 - Fish and Crab fattening initiatives were taken for livelihood activities
- 43 disaster Resilience housing and a school were set up in Padmapukur of Shyamnagar, Satkhira.
 - 300 elevated Latrine (300 nos) were additionally built in Tala of Satkhira

Long-term Rehabilitation for Survivors of Rana Plaza tragedy, 2013

In an effort to launch long term rehabilitation and wellbeing support for those affected by the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013, BRAC partnered with Matalan, Benetton Group, Walmart Foundation and International Labour Organization and initiated three projects to assist a total of 780 survivors. BHP later extended medical care support projects for the survivors upto June 2021 seeing the medical needs. Supported by BRAC USA, this initiative will ensure continued support to 110 survivors with the provision of medical, psychosocial, rehabilitative care, WASH support, and economic and social recovery from COVID-19 challenges.

2014 cold wave

During the exceptionally cold winter of 2014, BRAC distributed 114,000 blankets at North-west and West part of the country

2016 Waterlogging

Flood resilient Housing were rebuilt for remote marginalized communities living in waterlogged areas of Jashore. The communities were equipped with elevated latrine and rain water harvesting, schools, approach road and cash for work activities to revive livelihood.

2016 Cyclone Roanu

A relatively weak tropic cyclone that caused severe flooding in Bangladesh during May 2016 resulted in 26 deaths. . BRAC responded through:

- Water, food supplies and cash transfers to affected families as well as special cash grants to school-level board examination candidates.
- Rehabilitation interventions were shaped by the Cyclone Roanu Recovery Project. The project was implemented in Bashkhali and Anwara sub districts of Chattagram and Kutubdia sub district of Cox's Bazar districts. A total of 135 resilient houses were designed for vulnerable populations in order to respond to disaster and long-term climate change phenomena.

2017 Rohingya Response

After the influx of forcibly displaced population into Cox's Bazar district began in August 2017, BRAC rolled out a massive response operations for the Rohingya population and host community. Over the years, BRAC has:

- Set up shelters for 167,000 people
- Established child friendly spaces for 100,000 children
 - Constructed 21,063 latrines
- Reached 1.3 million people through outpatient screening in community health outlets
 - 1,879 community awareness meetings were
- Registered 61,185 children and adolescents in learning centres
 - Planted 26,605 trees at the host communities
- Delivered 10,532 psychosocial support services through skilled staff
 - Mobilised 800 volunteers on the ground
- Provided vegetables seeds to 110,276 households

2017 Cyclone Mora

Severe Cyclonic Storm Mora was a moderate but fatal tropical cyclone that caused widespread devastation and severe flooding. The storm made landfall in May 2017. A total of 500,000 people were evacuated. At least 20,000 houses were damaged in Rohingya refugee camps. Nine people lost their lives and 81 Bangladeshi fishermen were reported missing. We reached affected communities through:

- Education kits for 7,000 primary school students.
- Renovated roofs of three child friendly spaces in makeshift settlements of Teknaf and Ukhia sub districts in Cox's Bazaar where Rohingya refugees resided.

2017 Flash Flood

The flood started on 28th March affecting six districts in the haor wetlands and low-lying northeast region of Bangladesh. It was caused due to heavy rainfall and onrush from the upstream river. It destroyed nearly-ready-for-harvesting boro rice across almost 160,170 hectors of land. We rapidly answered the call to action by:

- Distributing rice to 59,342 households.
- Providing cattle feed to 9,518 ultra poor households.
- Setting up deworming and vaccinating camps for 20,020 cattle.
- Ensuring midday meals for 5,500 students of 221 schools.
- Ensured continued education by arranging pick up and drop off services by ferry boats for 6,911 students from 51 schools.
- Introducing and producing 500 kgs of hydroponic grass using wheat seed to replenish shortage of cattle feed.

Monsoon Flood of 2017

From August 2017, heavy monsoon rain caused intense flooding across more than one-third of Bangladesh. A total of 31 districts in the northern, north eastern, and central parts of the country were deluged due to overflowing of the Brahmaputra and Jamuna rivers, affecting more than 600,000 people.

Through BRAC:

- 2,500 farmers received support.
- 75 houses were rebuilt, with 45 toilets and 15 shallow tube wells.
- 750 adolescents from BRAC's Adolescent Clubs were given hygiene kits.
- 10,000 primary school students were provided school kits worth BDT 2,000,000.
- BDT 2,500,000 worth of food support was given to recipients receiving BDT 1,000 each.

Landslides of 2017

From June, heavy monsoons caused landslides in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region of Bangladesh. The landslides wrought significant damage to infrastructure, resources, life and livelihoods. Over 160 people were killed in devastating mudslides in six southeastern districts, of which 120 were killed in Rangamati alone. Some 3,500 people, took shelter in 19 government and Red Crescent run shelters. BRAC quickly dispatched frontline staff and supported survivors who lost homes:

- 1,083 mosquito nets were distributed.
- 54 malaria tests were conducted in makeshift camps.
- 471 non-food Items (NFI) kits containing mainly utensils were distributed in 12 camps.
- 133 hygiene kits were distributed.

2019 Cyclone Fani

Cyclone FANI (pronounced Foni) crossed Bangladesh in May 2019. Though in a weakened state, FANI still caused moderate damage, injuries, and loss of life across the country. Affected sectors included agriculture, health, WASH, food, and shelter. Through coordination with field teams, BRAC responded by providing:

- 10 food packages to 75 families, each worth BDT 52,000.
- 1,457 people at Mongla and Rampal cyclone shelters received dry food.
- 23 families received BDT 40,000 Patharghata sub district of Barguna district.
- 100 families received BDT 100,000 in Noakhakhali district.

2019 Cyclone Bulbul

Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Bulbul was a very damaging tropical cyclone which struck Bangladesh in November 2019, causing storm surge, heavy rains, and flash floods. A total of 25 people died and agricultural crops and farmlands were destroyed. We reached affected populations through cash support, blanket distribution and educational materials.

2019 Fire Outbreaks

A total of 8 fire incidences were reported, in Nilphamari, Shariatpur, Chattagram, Dhaka and Rangamati districts respectively. We answered the call by distributing blankets, shares for women, lungis for men, gamchas (light cotton towels), kitchen utensils, rice, lentils, other non food items including mosquito nets, and cash (BDT 500 each) and essential psychosocial support to vulnerable groups.

2019 Riverbank Erosion

Riverbank erosion mainly occurred due to the braided nature of Bangladesh's river systems and was further aggravated by heavy rainfall, particularly upstream, and increased water flow. In its response, the BHP provided cash support worth BDT 1,000, BDT 3,000 or BDT 4,500 to 50 affected people from 350 households in erosion-affected areas of Naria sub district in Shariatpur district

2019 Cold Wave

January 2019 was the coldest month recorded in Tetulia of Panchagar district, at a chilling 2.6 degrees Celsius. During this month, we responded to a total of three cold waves in Bangladesh's northern districts of Panchagar, Thakurgaon and Kurigram. Blankets were distributed and communities were nestled from the bitter cold.

COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak in 2020

We tackled the coronavirus outbreak with the goal of reaching 80 million of the most vulnerable families across Bangladesh who were affected by the economic lockdown. Our COVID-19 response was focused on the highest risk areas: urban slums, refugee settlements and people living in ultra-poverty. BRAC's immediate short-term focus was also on prevention, through community engagement, behaviour change and mass campaigning. This has included creating a world-standard course on COVID-19, using it to train staff and volunteers, equipping them with personal protective wear, supporting the government and then sending them to millions of households country-wide equipped with information and sanitation products.

2020 Cyclone Amphan

Super Cyclone Amphan made landfall in Bangladesh in May 2020. The cyclone affected 2.6 million people in the coastal districts of Khulna and Barishal divisions. At least 26 people lost their lives and many more were injured. A total of 55,667 houses were damaged, communications was disrupted, and standing crops were destroyed as well as WASH facilities. We helped impoverished communities rebuild their lives and livelihoods by:

- Providing food packages and safe drinking water to affected families in 10 sub-districts of Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat districts.
- Giving conditional cash grants to 10,600 badly affected families for restoration of their damaged houses, latrines and tube wells along with Tippy Water Tap hand-washing facilities.

2020 Monsoon Flood

The Monsoon floods coupled with prolonged inundation and the COVID-19 pandemic became a crisis within a crisis. In late June 2020, heavy monsoon rainfall throughout Bangladesh along with large scale onrush of water from upstream regions resulted in a massive flood in low-lying areas of its northern, north-eastern and central districts of the country. An estimated 996,980 families were stranded in water for record breaking prolonged duration of months, and 41 people died. BRAC disseminated flood awareness messages by incorporating COVID-19 prevention measures in flood-ravaged districts through community radios, social media, and door-to-door visits. Immediately after the flood hit, BHP:

- Distributed dry food packages, safe drinking water and oral saline to the most affected families. It constructed toilet facilities at temporary flood shelters.
- Following the flood, BHP provided cash support to 50,000 flood affected most vulnerable families in 15 sub-districts under seven of those worst affected districts.
- Recovery support included 12,000 flood-stricken and economically disadvantaged families through cash for livelihood recovery, house repair through cash for work, distribution of agricultural inputs for nutrition improvement, damaged tube wells and latrines repair.

2020 Fire Incidents

Notun Bazar Slum Kalyanpur, Dhaka

A massive fire broke out in October 2020 at Notun Bazar slum in Kalyanpur area that left a trail of destruction among residents. Forty houses and 14 shops were completely burnt. We immediately rushed to the scene, and in coordination with local government representatives, we distributed 50 non-food item boxes containing tupper wear and cutlery and distributed them to as many affected families.

Maniknagar Slum Fire of 2020

In February 2020, approximately 170 houses were destroyed by a devastating fire that swept across Maniknagar slum locally known as Comilla Potti affecting nearly 4,000 people. Through a coordinated response with district level staff at the ground, we provided 157 NFI boxes to affected slum residents. where 155 were women (including pregnant and lactating mothers) and 2 men.