



# ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Urban Development Programme

2022



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**Published by**

BRAC Urban Development Programme

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BRAC, a southern international development organisation reaching over 100 million people globally, is working to tackle multi-faceted challenges through its inclusive urban development strategy. BRAC introduced its Urban Development Programme (UDP) in 2016, with a vision to make cities and urban settlements safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable.

## BRAC Vision

A world free from all forms of exploration and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential.

## BRAC Mission

Our mission is to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Our interventions aim to achieve large scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enables women and men to realise their potential.

## UDP Goal

Make Bangladesh's cities a place where all people can live and thrive.



## Message from the Director

Urban areas play a vital role in economic growth, fostering innovation, and facilitating cultural exchange. Currently, 31.51% of the country's population resides in urban areas (BBS, 2022) and the projected urban population is to reach 58% by 2051 (GED, 2020), urban Bangladesh is responsible for generating over 65% of the national GDP. However, this rapid urbanization has resulted in new urban dwellers being expected to live in informal and unplanned neighbourhoods, which presents significant challenges in terms of infrastructure, housing, and services.

Recognizing these challenges, the government has consistently prioritized urbanization in its national development plans, with the 8th 5-year plan (2021-2025) prioritizing sustainable and inclusive urban development to enhance governance, improve infrastructure, promote climate resilience, and provide essential services to all citizens.

With the vision to make life in the cities and low-income settlements more safe, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable BRAC's Urban Development Programme (UDP) has been working with local government, and key stakeholders leveraging our grassroots connections to uplift communities through locally-led and community-driven solutions.

Building upon the success of UDP's intervention in the past six years, in 2022, UDP continued its critical role to ensure 'Empowerment', 'Governance' and 'Access to Affordable Urban Services'. We have provided training and capacity building to vulnerable populations, implemented climate-adaptive infrastructure projects, and advocated for the needs of

marginalized communities. We have reached more than 800,000 people with all these interventions. We have focused more on the well-being of the urban occupation groups, the development of peri-urban low-income settlements and initiated climate change adaptation interventions in coastal towns. We have tried to align our efforts with the SDGs, the government Five Year Plan and other policy instruments.

Leveraging our experience, knowledge and partnership, UDP will continue addressing the evolving needs of urban communities, strengthening pro-poor governance, and promoting inclusive and sustainable urban development in the years ahead. The programme will continue to innovate, adapt, and foster positive change. Through collaborative efforts, knowledge sharing, and community engagement, let us embark on this journey towards inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban development, creating a brighter future for urban Bangladesh.

### Dr. Md Liakath Ali

Director  
Urban Development Programme, BRAC  
Climate Change Programme, BRAC  
Disaster Risk Management Programme, BRAC

## Message from the Programme Head

In its sixth year of operation, BRAC Urban Development Programme continues to extend its intervention across urban areas in Bangladesh, with an emphasis on locally-led and community-driven solutions. We are working closely with the local government and our knowledge partners to promote inclusive, gender-responsive, and resilient urban development.

Improved governance and community engagement form the basis of UDP's development interventions. As we continue to focus on the system approach, our work emphasizes an intensive and active engagement of the local government in pro-poor and inclusive urban planning. This is a work in progress that we hope to achieve through our project on promoting migrant-friendly cities through locally-led adaptation for urban climate resilience.

In 2022, UDP made significant progress in terms of its effort to foster inclusive economic growth. It has successfully engaged vulnerable groups, i.e., economically disadvantaged women and persons with special needs, in sustainable non-traditional livelihood activities as well as brought more than a thousand people in urban LICs under government safety-net coverage. This success is a large attribution of the 'Nogor Doridro Shurokkha Forum' that was formed with representatives from the disadvantaged community, businesses, and the local government in ten cities. This is an example of how partnership and local-level advocacy can help promote equity-based urban development.

Our work on a sustainable street vendor management strategy, created in cooperation with Dhaka North City

Corporation (DNCC), is another notable intervention. The model being piloted in the Mirpur-10 circle area, showing progress in organizing street vending zones, promoting public health and hygiene, ensuring public space security, and identifying alternative business scopes for vendors. In this course UDP continues to provide non-traditional skills development training to women, empowering them to engage in income-generating activities that challenge traditional gender roles.

The achievements thus far acquired are evidence of the consistent support of our committed team, partners, and kind donors. Together, we are and will continue our effort to improve the lives of those living in urban areas. As we look to the future, we are motivated and focused to carry on with our work, bring in innovations, and scaling up our interventions in the premise of empowerment, governance, and accessibility to low-cost urban services.

### Imamul Azam Shahi

Programme Head  
Urban Development Programme, BRAC



## Executive Summary

In 2022, BRAC Urban Development Programme (UDP) made significant strides in reducing urban poverty, promoting economic development, and achieving growth across cities and urban centres of Bangladesh. Through its diverse programmes and initiatives focused on helping communities in need, UDP is making an impact by strengthening its systems to make communities and cities inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

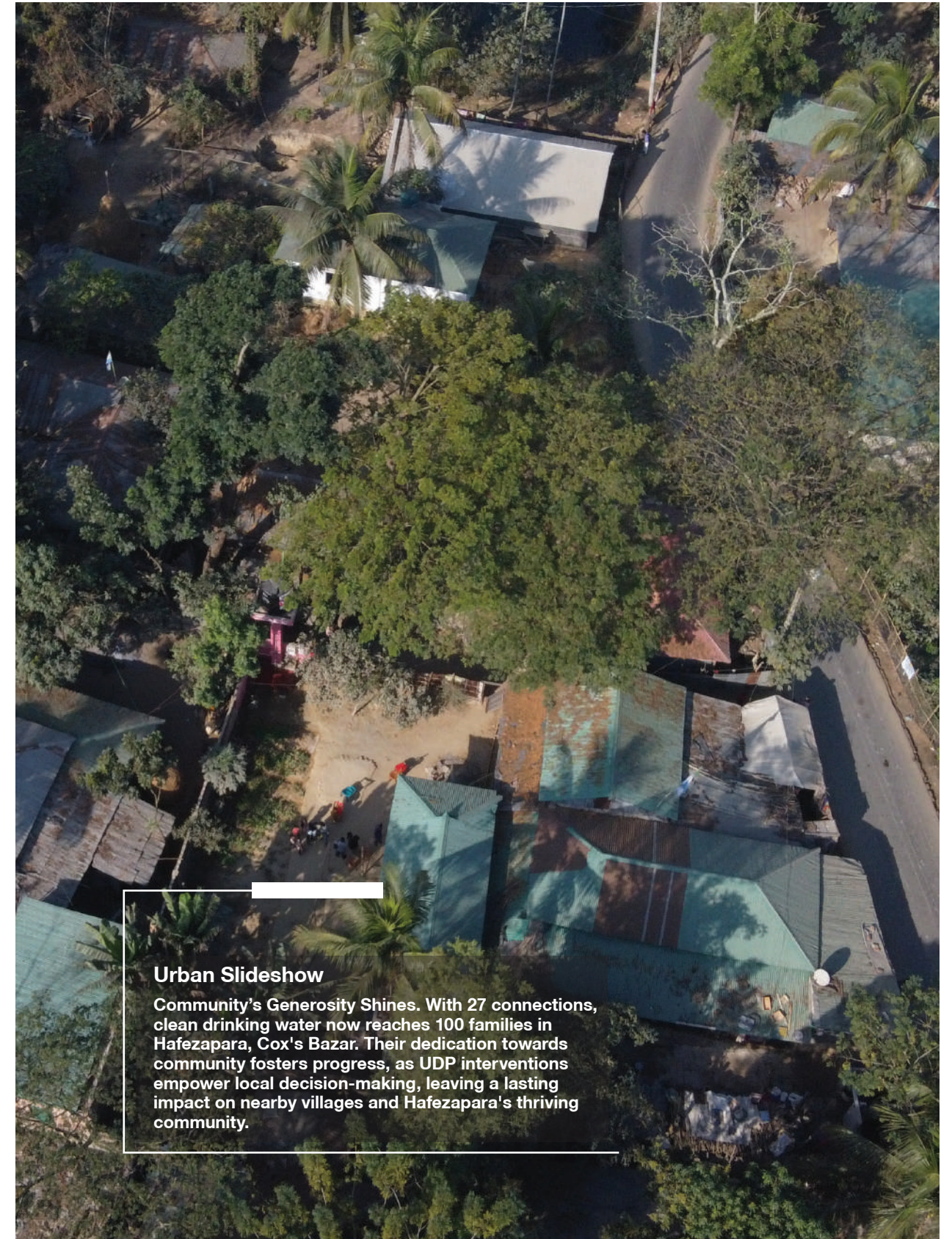
UDP's approach is rooted in the recognition of coordinated efforts between communities, municipalities and development organizations. One of the notable highlights of 2022 was UDP's city-level advocacy through pre-budget dialogues which aimed to secure increased budget allocation towards inclusive urban development. These efforts were informed by evidence-based decision-making findings of the Community Action Plan (CAP) prepared by the Community Development Organization (CDO). This advocacy is aimed to reduce multidimensional urban poverty and recognize the value of the informal sector to the local economy.

Empowerment and socio-economic strengthening of the urban communities continue to be prioritized by UDP. The establishment of 'Nogor Doridro Shurokkha Forums' provided economically disadvantaged women and persons with

special needs with opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and income-generating activities.

The launch of the 'Economic Recovery of Climate Migrants and New Poor Living in Climate-Vulnerable Urban Low-Income Settlements (ERP)' project marked a significant milestone for the programme. With support from the Climate Bridge Fund (CBF) and KfW, the project aimed to tackle climate-induced migration and provide economic stability to 22,000 individuals through resilient livelihoods, adaptive skills training, enhanced sanitation, and access to social safety nets. Another project supported by Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) focused on building a resilient and migrant-friendly town through locally led adaptation (LLA) at Mongla Municipality addressing the challenges of climate change and internal migration by empowering communities and promoting locally-led solutions.

UDP's commitment to transforming urban systems is evident in its work on Non-Traditional Livelihood (NTL). The programme's effort to extend toward skills development and training for women to help thousands of women to start their businesses and earn an income. Furthermore, UDP has significantly contributed to a sustainable street vendor management model in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) to bring discipline to street vending in public spaces.



### Urban Slideshow

**Community's Generosity Shines.** With 27 connections, clean drinking water now reaches 100 families in Hafezapara, Cox's Bazar. Their dedication towards community fosters progress, as UDP interventions empower local decision-making, leaving a lasting impact on nearby villages and Hafezapara's thriving community.



Two consultations (i) 'Meeting on Policy Framework of Health Insurance for the Wellbeing of RMG Workers in Bangladesh' and (ii) 'National Consultation on the Well-being of RMG Workers' were also held as part of the UDP's stronger advocacy and footprint to support the well being of Ready Made Garments Workers (RMG). These consultations brought together diverse stakeholders from government entities, the private sector, development partners, and the media, facilitating knowledge-sharing, innovation, and best practices for empowering workers in the sector.

In addition to these efforts, UDP has been working to strengthen the systems that support urban development in Bangladesh. This includes working with government and other stakeholders including youth to develop climate-resilient urban planning policies, as well as supporting the development of social safety nets to protect vulnerable populations from the impacts of climate change. UDP fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among the younger generation and continues to engage youth in community development activities, including distributing hygiene kits and organizing health camps. UDP continues to empower youth by providing platforms for their active participation in decision-making processes and equipping them with the skills necessary to drive sustainable urban development.

Through the revitalization of community open spaces, the programme challenges the lack of open spaces in urban areas.

Four community open spaces with support from CDOs in Rangpur, Chattogram, and Khulna have been initiated by UDP to provide spaces for social connection, recreation, and leisure.

During emergencies, especially during the northeastern floods in Sylhet. UDP in collaboration with HSBC Bank, provided relief and support to affected communities by ensuring safe water, clean toilets, and menstrual hygiene management kits. By integrating resilience into emergency response efforts, the programme demonstrated its commitment to building resilient communities capable of withstanding and recovering from climate-related shocks.

These accomplishments represent a fraction of the extensive work that was carried out by the programme in 2022. UDP continues to bring about transformational change through strategic advocacy, empowerment initiatives, system-strengthening activities, and community involvement. The programme's continued commitment to inclusive and sustainable urban development is crucial to make a tangible difference in building a resilient and prosperous future across Bangladesh.



#### Urban Slideshow

Runu (from the right) and her friend are on their way to school in Shyampur, one of Dhaka's informal settlements. They beamed effortlessly when approached to capture their smiles, exuding happiness and hope. Despite the challenges of living in overcrowded settlements with limited services, their determination to education is a testament to the unwavering power of possibility.

# Content

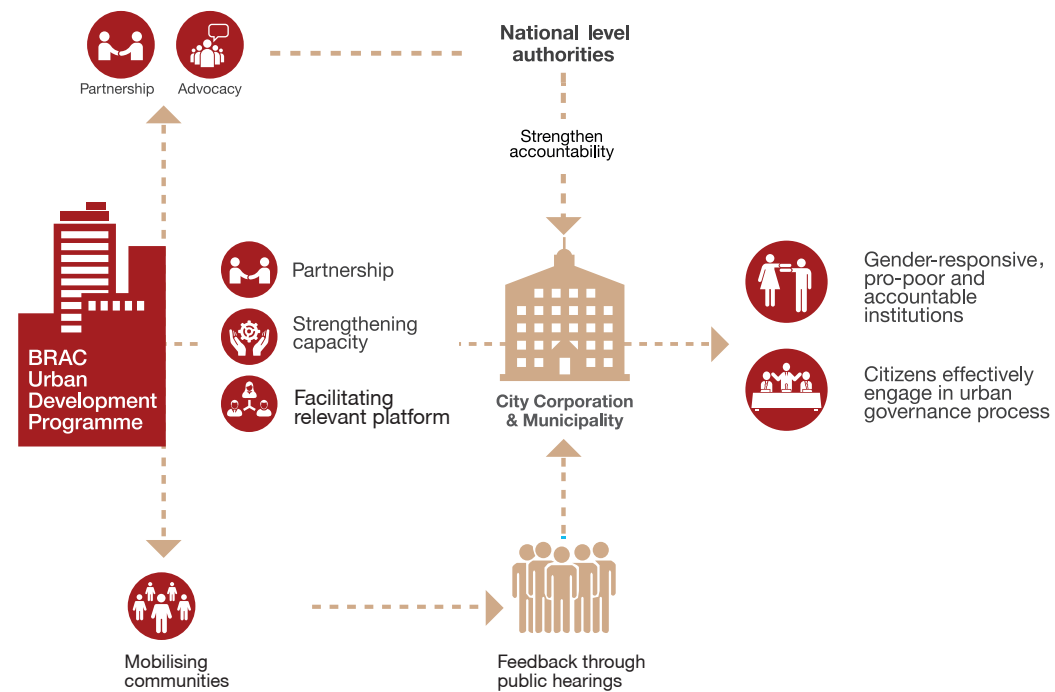
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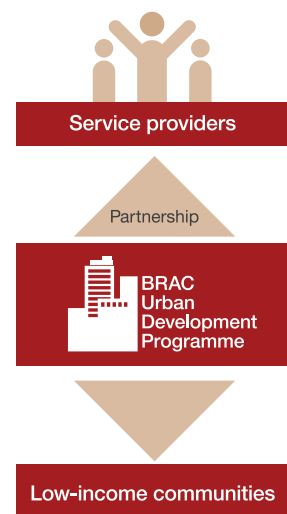


# Our approach

## 1. Promote pro-poor governance



## 2. Ensure access to quality, affordable basic services



## 3. Foster innovation



### Urban Slideshow

Nasima, with glaring brown eyes and smiles of a thousand suns, embodies the spirit of human perseverance. Through the weight she carries (the pitcher of water being carried from far distance early in the morning), in every step to secure water for her family, she embodies strength amidst the struggle.



# Our priorities



Foster inclusive urban economic growth



Eliminate social barriers to gender equality



Inclusive urban planning and governance



Building resilient communities



## Urban Slideshow

Saira Begum is a well-known mason in her community. She has come a long way through hard work, resourcefulness, and perseverance. She currently lives at Notun Bazar, Khulna, with her children. She exemplifies the self-made female, overcoming all life challenges while making earnings in a male-dominated profession.



# Annual scorecard

**2541** women received leadership and community development training and awareness messages

**2054** working age (18+) women received skills and enterprise development training, and other livelihood support either from BRAC government/non-government agencies

**51813** people received healthcare services and awareness raising on health and nutrition issues

**326** people received housing support (renovation/built)

**275759** targeted urban people benefitted through hygiene awareness and inclusive municipal services

**6371** participants provided with financial support, 1 or more Income Generating Activities (IGA) support was provided directly from UDP and other service providers (government and private organisation)

**12020** Provided referral service to healthcare facilities

**1359** Facilitated eligible urban poor to be included in the government safety net, including PWD

**2109** eligible women's soft and technical skills enhanced through training and receiving livelihood support

**370** infrastructures developed

**1545** people received emergency food and medicine distribution

**2742** people engaged in city corporation/municipality awareness campaigns

**376** incidences of VAWG and hazardous behaviors, such as child marriage, were reported to BRAC programs, other NGOs, or the government's administrative branch.

**6277** people received agricultural inputs such as seed/seedlings

**9** climate adaptive block gardening support provided

**1448** of men sensitised through behaviour change interventions on gender equality and positive masculinity

**102595** targeted urban low-income people – including climate migrants – benefitted from basic infrastructure development support, including affordable housing support

**140,199** persons received services for vector-borne diseases (Dengue, Chikungunya).

**4005** person received health services through health camps.

**2475** individuals (men and women) have completed VAWG training and are familiar with the VAWG reporting process.

**4525** of households received emergency support during the Sylhet flood response

# Our Footprint



**Urban Slideshow**  
Karim Mia's smile lifts the spirits of all around him. When we approached him for this portrait, he was sipping a cup of tea before heading out to pull a rickshaw. With each dawn, as he pedals through the city, He embodies living each day to the fullest, embracing the present moment while tirelessly striving for a brighter tomorrow for his grandchildren.



## Inclusive Planning and Governance

### Pro-poor urban strategy development

The Urban Development Programme has been consistently working together with City Corporations and Municipalities to ensure poverty issues are addressed in their plans. Based on this objective, the programme engaged an expert from urban and regional planning department of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology to review the available urban development plans of Chattogram City Corporation and Cox's Bazar municipality and to prepare pro-poor urban strategies. The expert provided meaningful support to review past and present urban development tools of the two cities including the

structure plan, urban development plan, poverty reduction strategy, climate change vulnerability assessment report, annual budget, etc. Two city reports were henceforth prepared based on the reviews. The findings indicated that there was not enough effort to ensure the active participation of the people living in low-income informal communities in the planning process. The reports were validated through city-level consultation workshops with presence of the city mayors, city council, civil society, communities and other relevant stakeholders.

### Pre-budget dialogues

The FY 2022-2023 pre-budget discussions were held across all major cities in the country where the Urban Development Programme strongly advocated the need for more budget allocation towards urban development activities to reduce urban poverty, boost economic development, achieve universal growth and support the country in achieving middle-income status.

On 16 and 17 May, the pre-budget discussions were held at Cox's Bazar and Chattogram respectively as part of the initiative. Councilors, municipality officials,

development partners, civil society members, community leaders and the media were present on the day. The discussions emphasised on the need for more coordinated work between municipality, communities and development organisations and increased fund allocation for the cities' operational and development priorities. Mr. A.K.M. Tariqul Alom, CEO of the Cox's Bazar Municipality and Mr. Mohammad Gias Uddin, Honorable Mayor (acting) of Chattogram City Corporation were present on the day.



## Formation of Nogor Doridro Shurokkha Forums

The 'Nogor Doridro Shurokkha Forum' was formed with an aim to engage economically disadvantaged women and persons with special needs amongst the Urban Development Programme participants so they can participate in sustainable Non-Traditional Livelihood (NTL) and appropriate income generating activities; take necessary measures/liaison activities to involve disadvantaged groups in government sponsored special allowance programs so they can effectively combat

poverty; to sensitise local public in respective cities and ensure their active participation.

In the year 2022, a total of ten Nogor Doridro Shurokkha Forums consisting of 10-11 members were formed in presence of the Mayors and Councilors of the respective cities: Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Gaibandha, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Satkhira, Savar, Sirajganj and Savar.

## Coordination workshop between Dhaka WASA and NGOs

On 14 November 2022, the Integrated Rehabilitation Programme for WASH Services (IRP-WASH) organised a central coordination workshop between Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WASA) and NGOs, addressing challenges and opportunities related to legal water connections in low-income communities. The workshop aimed to engage

multi-sector partners to create opportunities and avoid resource duplication. Participants discussed water connection for low-income people and water tariff issues, with attendance from Dhaka WASA's Chief Engineer, Commercial Manager, officials, and NGO representatives.



## Interventions for Occupation Groups





## Sustainable street vendor management model

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and BRAC have jointly taken an inclusive and equity-based initiative to bring discipline to street vending in public spaces. As part of the initiative, a sustainable street vendor management model has been developed that is being piloted in the Mirpur-10 circle area.

In the model, ground level stakeholders, i.e. the concerned offices of the zonal executive and the ward councillors of DNCC are working as key implementers supported by a technical team consisting of representatives from city authority and BRAC. Additionally, a separate advisory committee (the Technical Working Group - TWG) formed by DNCC is overseeing the pilot. The implementation process is following a rigorous six step approach – (i) sketching a vendor list utilising the ground experience of field level stakeholders; (ii) outlining design for reorganising spaces in the absence of a legal framework; (iii) promoting public health and hygiene; (iv) ensuring public space security; (v) identifying alternative business scope for sustainable livelihoods of existing vendors; (vi) project process monitoring over the entire project cycle for documentation, learning and envisioning the policy options.

**In 2022, visible progresses have been seen in the Mirpur-10 circle area regarding the street vendor management model. Footpaths have been marked with red, green and yellow zones. Shops in designated zones are being operated between 4.00 pm to 10.00 pm. Street vendors are running shops five days a week and cannot keep goods on the footpath outside business hours. Vendors are being asked to build mobile shops that have been designed through participatory design workshop. About 2,436 vendors of Mirpur-10 area have been listed using an app called 'Street Vendor Management in Public Space' operated by the local ward councillor. Vendors are also setting up shops leaving the pedestrian walkway on a specific place marked on the pavement. The ward councillor has also appointed volunteers to manage the vending operation.**

## Partnership development through the ERMG Project

In 2022, various efforts were undertaken through the ERMG project at the factory level to enhance the wellbeing of RMG workers. Collectively, these partnership initiatives represent significant strides towards better working conditions and improved wellbeing of the RMG workers.

Under the Urban Development Programme's existing partnership with 'Mobility Solutions' – a leading physiotherapy center in the country – the project was able to support over 1,200 workers in Savar, Tongi and Gazipur with ergonomic consultation and therapy services through factory camps.

Additionally, through a new partnership with 'Moner Bondhu' – a platform that provides care for mental health and wellbeing – the project was able to provide psychosocial counselling to 163 workers over the course of the year.

'Apon Wellbeing Ltd.' – an omni channel marketplace for products and services for industrial workers in Bangladesh – was also a new partnership that the project was keen to explore and had held several meetings with over the course of the year. However, it still remains in the preliminary stage of discussion with the factories we have agreements with.

## Consultation on the wellbeing of RMG Workers

The 'Consultation meeting on policy framework of health insurance for the wellbeing of RMG workers in Bangladesh' was jointly organised by BRAC, Health Insurance Network and Workplace Based Dialogue Network on 14 November 2022. The event brought together a diverse range of stakeholders with the objective to share the Health Insurance Policy Framework and to jointly develop an action plan for fostering the issue at policy level.

Dr. Syeda Naushin Parnini, Deputy Secretary and Director, Research, Health Economics Unit, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Dr. Sharmeen Mobin Bhuiyan, Professor and Director, Institute of Health Economics, Dhaka University attended and spoke as special guests. Masud Ahmed, Senior Programme Manager, Urban Development Programme, BRAC chaired the event and the keynote presentation was delivered by Dr. Syed Abdul Hamid, Professor, Institute of Health Economics, Dhaka University.

**Earlier on 25 August 2022, the 'National Consultation on the wellbeing of RMG Workers' was also held emphasising on the knowledge, innovations and best practices of the ERMG project and the role of Government, BGMEA and other stakeholders in ensuring the wellbeing of RMG workers. Honourable Minister of the Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Tipu Munshi, graced the event as Chief Guest along with multiple stakeholders from the Government, private sector, development partners and the media.**



## ERMG: Year-long Updates

In June 2017, BRAC launched the ‘Empowering the RMG workers living in urban slums of Dhaka (ERMG)’ project to improve the wellbeing of 50,000 RMG workers over six years. The project provided direct services such as health, legal aid, skills development training, financial

savings products, health insurance and access to online health services through three one-stop service centres (OSSCs) in Savar, Tongi and Gazipur. The project collaborated with other BRAC programmes including HNPP, SDP, SELP, BIED and Microfinance to achieve its objectives.

### Skills development

Established customised training programme:  
**Male-439**  
**Female-513**  
**Graduate-952**  
**Job placement- 868**

### Legal aid support

Legal aid support including counselling, ADR, referral and court case  
**Male-119**  
**Female-633**  
**Total-752**

### Access to health service

Access to health service-(Health camp, new patient and old patient)  
**Male-3859**  
**Female-6221**  
**Total-10080**

### Advocacy for effective urban governance

Cultural activities including observation  
**Male-521**  
**Female-508**  
**Total-1029**

Bridge affiliation meeting  
**Male-99**  
**Female-32**  
**Total-131**

Event at factory level (meetings, workshops, orientations)  
**Male-1341**  
**Female-892**  
**Total-2233**

### Campaign on VAWG

Training and awareness campaigns on VAWG  
**Male-64**  
**Female-86**  
**Total-150**

### The support shield for the RMG Workers

Workshop on financial literacy training  
**Male-314**  
**Female-336**  
**Total-650**

Furthermore, the project also conducted various awareness campaigns on gender-based violence, worker rights, domestic violence and healthy hygiene practices – reaching approximately 3,171 people. Several workshops, including a two-day workshop on employability skills

and a national consultation on the well-being of RMG workers, were also organised. The project had also jointly organised a national dialogue on the ‘Policy Framework for Health Insurance of the RMG Workers in Bangladesh’ with multi-sectoral stakeholders.



### Urban Slideshow

One of the ERMG program participants who received skills training from BRAC UDP. When we approached her to photograph her while she was stitching, she graciously obliged. Sitting at her station, focused to complete her task. She described how Her training unlocked doors to new horizons, paving the way for a brighter and fulfilling life."



## Foster Inclusive Urban Economic Growth



### Launch of the ERP Project

The BRAC Urban Development Programme backed by the Climate Bridge Fund (CBF) and KfW launched the 'Economic Recovery of the Climate Migrants and New Poor Living in Climate-Vulnerable Urban Low-Income Settlements (ERP)' as an emergency response project in August 2022 with an aim to tackle climate-induced migration in eight climate-vulnerable cities across Bangladesh.

The project targets to reach 22,000 individuals in Dhaka North City Corporation, Chattogram City Corporation, Gaibandha Municipality, Khulna City Corporation, Rajshahi City Corporation, Barishal City Corporation, Satkhira Municipality and Sirajganj Municipality.

Climate change and the economic consequences of the pandemic have particularly impacted Gaibandha, Sirajganj and Rajshahi in northern Bangladesh,

resulting in reverse migration. Challenges in these areas include flash floods, water scarcity and droughts. Coastal cities Barishal, Chattogram, Khulna and Satkhira are susceptible to cyclones, landslides, tidal waves and hurricanes, posing significant difficulties for displaced communities. Dhaka City has experienced a surge in poverty rates as a result of climate-displaced populations seeking better earnings opportunities in the cities.

The Urban Development Programme, through this project, aims to support people regain economic stability through resilient livelihoods, adaptive skills training, enhanced sanitation, access to government social safety nets and proper nutrition for their children. Moreover, the project will offer business asset support to rebound from economic shocks caused by global pandemics or climate-related disasters.





## Non-traditional skills

Non-traditional livelihood (NTL) opportunities are defined by income generating works including jobs, small and medium-scale businesses, entrepreneurship that challenge the division of labour based on the social construct of gender dichotomy. NTL enables women to pursue occupations and exemplify them in an otherwise male dominated sector in a given time and social context.

The Urban Development Programme provides women with training that equip them with resources, technologies and

skills to run non-traditional businesses. The training is provided both directly through the programme and indirectly through third-party institutions. Such as, this year the Rangpur team provided driving training to our NTL participants directly whereas the Rajshahi team collaborated with the Self Development Technical Training Institute (SDTTI) to provide the same driving training. After successful completion of the training, the participants have already gotten into jobs and begun earning an income.

## Engaging youth

### Positive youth engagement

Throughout the year, 'Youth Addas' were organised every quarter at the community level across UDP operating areas through which youth were made aware of positive masculinity, safeguarding issues, gender, disability inclusion, social safety net programmes and emergency response issues. They were empowered and provided with resources to come forward and help in times of need, such as when the devastating flood hit the country in June 2022. They provided volunteer assistance in distributing hygiene kits and organising health camps in Sylhet. Year round, they also played a key role in organising Violence

Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sessions, social dramas, day observations and seed and seedling distribution activities in the communities.

In Sylhet, inspired by the work of this youth group, the District Women's Affairs Office formed two clubs with the members of this group in wards 26 and 14 with the help of UNICEF. Through these clubs, various social activities were implemented to raise awareness, such as through short dramas. The youth group have even managed to stop early marriage with one of their group members in ward 26.







### Urban Slideshow

Majeda is a wholesaler of aquarium fishes. She breeds fish, such as goldfish, guppies, etc, and sells them to a select clientele in Itagachia. She has a sharp business mind and uses part of her income to take care of her mother and sister, who live with her. Majeda is passionate about her work and always wants to expand her business through consistency and perseverance. Majeda thrives as a Non-Traditional Livelihood participant of BRAC UDP.





### Urban Slideshow

Renu Begum, a BRAC UDP Non-Traditional Livelihood participant, thrives in bringing smiles and happiness to others with her colorful collection of toys. "She sells toys on the Riverbank in Greenland, Khulna. Her toys are popular with children from all throughout Khulna. Renu is working hard to keep up with the demand."





## Improving living environment

### Community open spaces

The year 2022 saw the Urban Development Programme revitalise four community open spaces, helping communities in Rangpur, Chattogram and Khulna create opportunities to connect socially through different public functions, recreational and leisure activities.

With support from the respective Community Development Organisations (CDOs) of the cities, the new open spaces in Rajendrapur community (Rangpur), 1 no. jheel community (Chattogram) and Greenland community and Bastuhara colony (Khulna) feature colourful brick walls, improved seating arrangements, gardens and children's rides. Informative social

messages and emergency phone numbers can be found on display on the corners for community use. The space offers myriad benefits, enhancing mental development for children, engaging youth in positive activities and providing the elderly and persons with disabilities a safe, accessible space for leisure.

The Khulna open space, known as Relier bagan, was also shortlisted as a nominee in the prestigious GCA Local Adaptation Champions Award as an inspiring, innovative and scalable locally led effort to address climate change and build resilience amongst vulnerable communities.

## Dealing urban emergencies

### Tackling the northeastern flood in Sylhet with support from HSBC

**In June 2022, Bangladesh witnessed some of the worst flooding in 122 years in the Sylhet region, hitting at a time when the country was still recovering from floods in late May, caused by the early arrival of the South Asian monsoons. Due to extreme torrential rain, several northeastern areas of Bangladesh including Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrokona had been flooded with residents being stranded without food, transport and shelter.**

During this time, the Urban Development Programme with support from the HSBC Bank launched a WASH Emergency Response Project to support flood affected communities in the Sylhet City Corporation so they can have safe water to drink, clean toilets to use and access menstrual hygiene management kits.

The inception meeting of the project was held on 24 July 2022 in presence of Ariful Haque Chowdhury, Honourable Mayor of the Sylhet City Corporation and Md. Liakath Ali, Director of the BRAC Urban Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Programme.

Following the inception meeting, the project activities begun by distribution of hygiene kits, water quality testing, repairing and disinfecting flood-affected tubewells, installation of community tubewells, renovation/construction of flood-affected WASH facilities in schools and spreading WASH awareness and education amongst the targeted families.



**In November 2022, two school WASH blocks were inaugurated at the Ramkrishna Girls School under ward 15 and Ghasitula Jamea Islamia Madrasha under ward 10, and one six-chambered WASH block was renovated at Moinuddin Adarsha Mohila College under ward 10 of the Sylhet City Corporation. These are schools where WASH blocks were destroyed by the floods in June 2022 and thus the constructions and renovations were carried out as part of the HSBC WASH Emergency Response Project.**

These WASH blocks contain separate chambers for boys and girls, disable-friendly ramps, handwashing devices, menstrual hygiene management amenities and sanitary pad boxes and devices for safe drinking water. Around 4217 students, teachers and staff will have access to safe water and sanitation facilities through the installation of these three school WASH Blocks.

The inauguration was carried out by the Honourable Mayor of Sylhet City Corporation, Md. Ariful Haque Chowdhury. The Chief Health Officer of Sylhet City Corporation, respective Ward Councilors, Chief Financial Officer Jignes Chetan Ruparel and Head of Communication Talukdar Noman Anawar of HSBC Bank, Program Head and Program Manager of BRAC Urban Development Programme and teachers of those schools were present at the event amongst others.



## New Interventions



## Daycare services

The Play Lab Daycare Center, by BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BIED) and Urban Development Programme begun operations in 2019, offering daycare services to working mothers in the RMG sector. This pilot initiative fostered early childhood development – physical, mental, cognitive and social growth. The pilot was then expanded into the community level through home-based daycare services. BRAC Institute of Educational Development (IED) at BRAC University was also involved into providing training to caregivers on adequate childcare and early childhood development methods.

**In 2022, 79 children aged 1-5 years accessed daycare facilities at the Tongi center and 115 children benefited from home-based daycare services provided by 35 caregivers at the Tongi, Gazipur and Savar centers. BRAC IED also facilitated basic and refresher training for caregivers, conducted workshops on creating play toys from recycled materials and collaborated with dedicated architects to renovate home-based Play Lab Daycare Centers – transforming them into safe, child-friendly spaces.**



## Launch of the Building Climate Resilient Migrant Friendly Towns through Locally Led Adaptation in Bangladesh Project

**In December 2022, BRAC's Urban Development Programme and Climate Change Programme in partnership with the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers (SPARC) launched a pilot project towards building a resilient migrant-friendly towns through Locally Led Adaptation (LLA). This project is being supported by the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) and comes at a crucial time when Bangladesh is grappling with the impacts of climate change, which has led to a significant number of internal migration.**

This project will unfold in three distinct phases: the (i) Model Building/Pilot phase, the (ii) Testing phase, and the (iii) Scaling-up phase. The pilot phase or the model building has already begun in Mongla and the testing phase is about to commence in the beginning of 2023 which involves expanding the initiative to three new towns. The outcomes from Mongla present a promising basis for scaling up a robust and adaptable model of climate resilience and migrant-friendly towns.

Through the implementation of this project, UDP is empowering communities to take ownership of their development and ensuring that no one is left behind. This initiative sets a strong precedent for other organisations and governments to follow, inspiring a broader movement towards locally-led adaptation and community empowerment in addressing the challenges of climate change and migration in urban planning.



## Health Services for the Low-Income People

### Urban Slideshow

Mohammed Yasin works as a security guard at a private bank near his home in Mirpur 11, Dhaka. When Yasin's eyesight began to fade, his work and family's financial stability was jeopardized. Yasin underwent a physical examination at the BRAC Urban Healthcare and Diagnostic Centre. He went on to have successful cataract surgery at Prime Bank Eye Hospital. Yasin's subsequent treatment allowed him to regain his work and independence. With his vision no longer impaired, and he can see everything around him clearly, colours and objects, and he can see things from a distance.







## Sensitizing the people and authorities

### Day Observations

To meet the Urban Development Programme's objective of improving governance for pro-poor and inclusive growth – various campaigns, rallies and discussions were held throughout the year to sensitise city authorities, inform low-income communities on the importance of urban poverty issues through day celebrations: World Habitat Day on the

theme 'Mind the Gap. Leave No One and No Place Behind' | International Women's Day on the theme '#BreakTheBias' | International Day of Person's with Disabilities on the theme "Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world" | World Cities Day on the theme 'Act Local to Go Global'.



## Learning Sharing

# Year-long visit

On 12 December 2022, the CEO of the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA), Prof. Dr. Patrick Verkooijen and delegations from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and BRAC visited Mongla, Bagerhat to assess the progress of the 'Climate Resilient Migrant-Friendly Towns through Locally Led Adaptation in Bangladesh' project. The CEO emphasised the importance of a locally-led approach to adaptation plans and expressed his hope for concrete development when he visits Mongla again next year. He also highlighted the importance of women's leadership and encouraged them to contribute to solving community problems. He believes the project's bottom-up approach will lead to a practical implementation plan, but also stressed the need for financial sources to implement them.

Md. Imamul Azam Shahi, Programme Head of BRAC Urban Development Programme presented the current situation and prospects of Mongla, including its climatic vulnerabilities, migration trend, and the impact of recent mega constructions. Sheikh Abdur Rahman, Mayor of Mongla Port Municipality emphasized the adverse effects of climate change on the lives of the city inhabitants and assured full involvement of the municipality in the project. The delegation visited two communities and listened to the needs of the frontline climate warriors, including a shortage of safe drinking water, lack of cyclone shelters, and the need for a planned drainage system. Jerome Oberreit, Executive Director of BRAC Global and Dr. Md. Liakath Ali, Director of the Climate Change, Urban Development and Disaster Risk Management Programme were also present during the visit.



On November 16, 2022, Shahriar Islam, Senior Programme Manager (Strategic Partnership, Safeguarding, M&E, Innovation, and Skills Development) at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), embarked on a visit to the Low-Income Community (LIC) of New Bridge (Khetchor) in the Chattogram City Corporation area. Accompanied by Programme Head Imamul Azam Shahi, Programme Managers Sajal Kumar Saha and Md. Saif Iqbal and representatives from Global Resource Mobilisation and Partnerships (GRP), BRAC, and Partnership Strengthening Unit (PSU), BRAC delved into the inner workings of the Urban

Development Programme (UDP)'s interventions.

The delegation explored a wide array of UDP initiatives, including waste management, urban agriculture, infrastructure development encompassing drainage systems, footpaths, and WASH facilities in schools, as well as livelihood support for enterprise development. Engaging with community leaders and participating in a Community Development Organisation (CDO) meeting, they gained insight into the Community Action Plan (CAP) process.

On 8 March 2022, the Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dr. Lilly Nicholls observed International Women's Day with community women leaders and members of BRAC UDP's community development organisation (CDO) in Korail slum. As a part of the celebration, a team led by Dr. Nicholls along with BRAC high officials including Asif Saleh, Executive Director; Dr. Md. Liakath Ali, Director of the Climate Change Programme, Urban Development Programme and Disaster Risk Management Programme; Nobonita Chowdhury, Director of the Gender Justice

and Diversity (GJD) Programme and other BRAC officials took part in the rally at Korail, Dhaka. They have also visited various interventions of BRAC, and interacted with the community women leaders to discuss how they are working to improve their lives and communities.

On 29 March 2022, the High Commissioner also visited UDP's interventions and various activities in Rangpur where the delegation talked to indigenous people in the community and observed how BRAC is transforming their lives and livelihoods.

The King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Programme (KAAP) mission team from Saudi Arabia visited the IRP WASH project interventions and activities in Dhaka, Saidpur and Nilphamari in March and December 2022. The mission, amongst others, comprised of Dr. Mohammed Simsim, KAAP Head; Eng. Abdullah Saeed, KAAP Portfolio Manager; Dr. Mohammed Suhail, KAAP Portfolio Manager; Br. Mohammed Javid, Portfolio Management

Officer; and Md. Arif Shahid, Country Coordinator. Senior management of the BRAC Urban Development Programme, including the Director Dr. Md. Liakath Ali and Programme Head Imamul Azam Shahi were present during both the visits, amongst others. As part of the visit, the KAAP mission team also had a meeting with staff to review the project progress and activities surrounding fund disbursement.



His Excellency Mr. Ito Naoki, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh visited the Bhashantek area on 23 August 2022 to assess the Urban Food Assistance Project of WFP and BRAC. Throughout his visit, he tried to understand how the project works and how it has helped communities during the pandemic. Through bilingual translation,

he was able to converse with participants and also witness them purchasing nutritious food and menstrual hygiene products using a QR card – giving him an idea of how the Urban Development Programme has been providing food assistance in certain urban communities.

A high official visit of the Sweden Embassy was held in October 2022 under the Urban Food Assistance Project at the Duwaripara location in Dhaka. H.E. Alexandar Berg Von Linde, Ambassador observed the fresh food transactions through block chain technology carried out by programme participants, visited households and home-based vegetable gardening as well as observed menstrual hygiene sessions. Amongst

others, present on the day were Imamul Azam Shahi, Programme Head of the BRAC Urban Development Programme; Md. Masud Ahmad, Senior Programme Manager of the BRAC Urban Development Programme; Domenico Scalpelli, Country Director of WFP; Kristine Blokhuis, Representative to UNFPA and Robert Simpson, FAO Representative to Bangladesh.

# Planning the year

## Review and planning workshop 2022

The Urban Development Programme held its 5th Annual Review and Planning Workshop from 21-23 May 2022 – focused on finalising the next five years’ strategy by

setting key strategic priorities and objectives, settling the interventions, carrying out risk analysis, capturing previous learnings and sharing it with all programme staff.



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