



COVID-19: SITUATION REPORT

16 APRIL 2020



24.5M

programme
participants oriented
on COVID-19



100,000+

workers on the
ground covering 64
districts



876,000

items of
protective wear
distributed



1.2M

hygiene products
distributed



154,739

families received cash
support

Make empathy go viral: Urgent appeal

BRAC has completed the first phase of providing cash support to 100,000 families.

The second phase started on 15 April with the aim of reaching 100,000 more families. **54,739 families** have been provided with cash support in the second phase so far, including ultra-poor households, those living in remote haor areas and host communities in Cox's Bazar district and indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

We have also launched a fundraising appeal to scale up the effort and increase the coverage. Details are available at: <https://www.brac.net/covid19/donate/>



BRAC has reached **54,739** out of a targeted **100,000** families with cash support for the second phase



FROM THE FRONTLINE



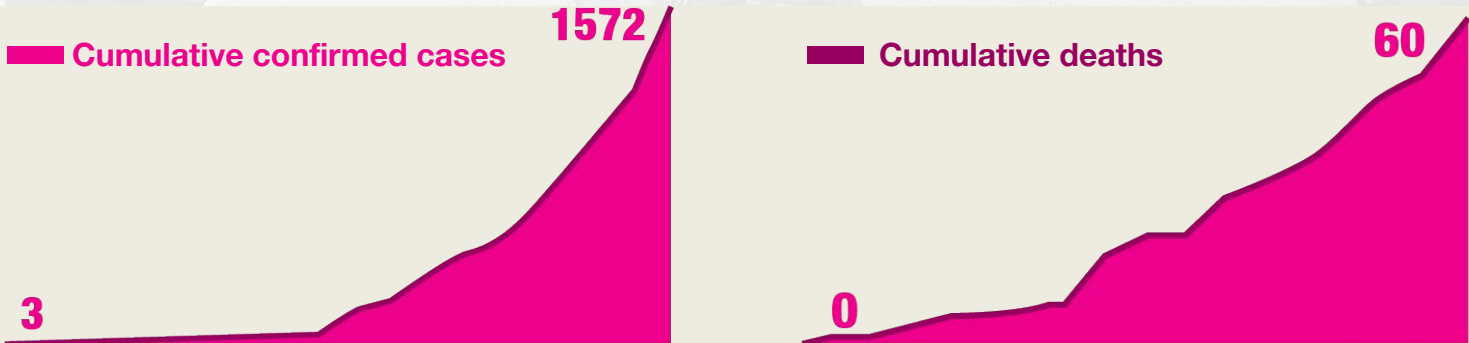
I individually reached out to all 78 of my clients, either through phone calls or in person. They needed information and reassurance, and I was equipped to give them both of those. BRAC trained me on the protection and prevention of COVID-19 and gave me protective wear. We went door-to-door, through village markets, shops and roads, handing out leaflets.

People doubted my abilities while I was growing up, because I am visually impaired in one eye after a childhood accident. I completed my masters in philosophy, joined BRAC and have been proudly serving my community ever since.

Nasrin Kowser, a credit officer for BRAC's microfinance programme, in Chattogram, southeastern Bangladesh.

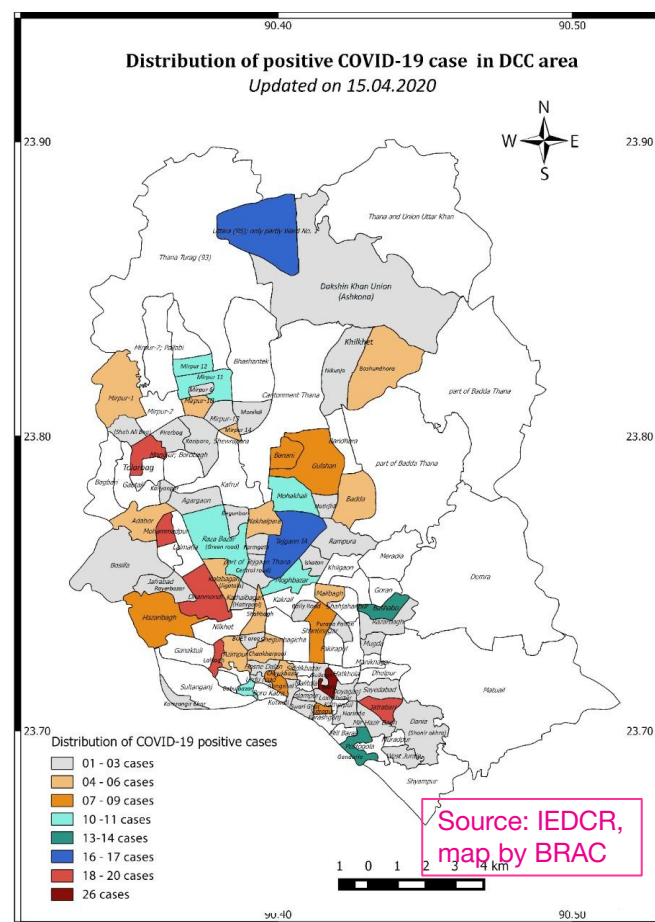


COVID-19 timeline in Bangladesh



Situation overview

- **There are 1,954,724 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally.** 126,140 lives have been claimed across 213 countries, areas or territories (updated: 16 April 2020, 06:00 GMT+6, [World Health Organisation](#)).
- **The Government has declared that Bangladesh is at risk** under the Infectious Disease (Prevention, Control and Elimination) Act, 2018. This declaration, under the [provision of this Act](#), enables law enforcers to try any violation of lockdown more strictly.
- **There has been a spike in reported cases in Bangladesh;** there are currently 1,572 confirmed cases as of 16 April 2020. 341 of these cases were identified in the last 24 hours, which is 143% higher compared to yesterday's number. The government's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) have confirmed 60 deaths to date. 10 of the deaths were reported in the last 24 hours.
- **Today is the 40th day from the first reported infection in Bangladesh.** During the first 40 days of infection, the US had 53 infections and zero deaths. India had 62 infections and zero deaths. Comparatively, Bangladesh's position is concerning.
- **The Government of Bangladesh has allocated BDT 7.6 billion as cash support for 15 million families** living in poverty as economic assistance. On 16 April, the Prime Minister announced that 5 million people will receive [ration cards](#) to claim their relief.
- **The Government of Bangladesh is facilitating the return of expatriate workers** in foreign countries, [after several countries](#) have asked for the repatriations of migrant workers, who are now jobless due to the pandemic. The government is facilitating their travel and has [announced loans for them](#).
- **Virologists fear that staying at home may increase the chances of being bitten by mosquitoes** during the day, and extra precautions are needed to [prevent the outbreak of dengue fever](#) this year.
- **Bangladesh's Islamic Foundation has issued directives to offer Tarabi prayers from home** during the month of Ramadan. The Prime Minister has urged all Muslim citizens in the country to follow the directive.
- **IEDCR reports that 81% of all cases are in Dhaka division.** 45% of the cases are concentrated across 92 areas of the capital city. Dhaka's Wari has the highest number of cases in the city, followed by Mirpur's Tolarbagh and Jatrabari.





BRAC's overall response to COVID-19

BRAC's immediate short-term focus is 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 equipment and then sending them to millions of households armed with information and sanitation products.

In parallel, we are strengthening systems, through providing information, volunteers and resources to government and civil society organisations. This has included supplying doctors to IEDCR's dedicated public hotlines, supplying field support teams at the community level, providing insights to a2i (a key wing within the ICT ministry) on where communication gaps exist, and sourcing equipment for under-resourced hospitals.

While the economy is in shutdown, BRAC is focusing on ensuring short-term relief to low-income earners and those living in poverty in cities and rural villages. Treating it as a humanitarian crisis, BRAC has made an initial commitment of BDT 150 million and is running an appeal to mobilise additional funds. Public-private partnerships have also been created, as well as mobilising funding from institutional partners.

As we realise that the economic impacts of the pandemic will be protracted, we are beginning to focus on livelihoods, developing a mid to long-term strategy for economic revitalisation of those living in extreme poverty.

Amidst an extremely fluid situation, BRAC is focusing on remaining adaptive and agile, and keeping pace with changing needs, particularly the needs of the people in the most vulnerable situations. We are also undertaking rapid needs assessment and evidence generation for mid to long-term response.



Emerging risks and challenges

- **100 healthcare professionals, including 54 doctors, have been infected with COVID-19.** The number has nearly doubled in the last four days. The first death of a doctor was registered today. There are currently approximately 300 health professionals in quarantine across the country. There is still a shortage of protective wear that meets the required standards for healthcare providers.
- **Distributing emergency relief to the most vulnerable is a persistent challenge.** The Prime Minister has categorically asked elected local representatives to go above and beyond political identities to distribute aid to those who are the most in need.
- **Healthcare professionals still lack clarity on the usage, maintenance and disposal of personal protective equipment.** BRAC is producing protection wear with guidelines from the Directorate General of Health Services. Health professionals will receive proper orientation on its usage, sanitisation and disposal. An organisational standard operating procedure for protective wear is being developed, clarifying the minimum requirements that are needed to be fulfilled by doctors, lab technicians, paramedics and other healthcare professionals wearing it.
- **The ready-made garment (RMG) factories are paying wages to their workers, albeit at a pace slower than expected.** All RMG factories were supposed to pay salaries by 16 April. However, as of 15 April, according to the BGMEA, only 78% of the factories have paid. They are expecting that the rest of the workers will be paid by Monday. The delay has caused mass labour unrest, which is also not conducive in maintaining social distance.
- **Major apparel brands are continuing to act slowly on orders and payments,** putting millions of garments workers' livelihoods at risk. While the garment manufacturers' associations are trying their best to secure the existing orders, several large brands remain non-committed.

- **National media is reporting people fleeing institutional, hospitalised and administrative quarantines.** Chattogram, Dhaka and Khulna divisions have the highest numbers of people in quarantine. Tangail, Brahmanbaria, Lakshmipur, Satkhira and Sunamganj are the top districts with people in quarantine. More than 27,600 people are being quarantined in the country at present.
- **Social ostracisation is increasing.** Doctors and health workers are being pressured by communities to leave areas in the fear that they may spread the virus. People are abandoning their relatives fearing that they might have been infected by the virus. Increased communication around this is needed so that people are more aware that this disease can be fatal for a small percentage.



Orientation, safety and safeguarding of staff and communities

- **92 million** people have been reached through social media with COVID-19 awareness messages.
- **24.5 million people** across the country are being reached by our 50,000 community health workers and volunteers with life-saving messages. They have identified at least 449 suspected cases of COVID-19, and immediately notified concerned local authorities for verification and testing.
- **18.8 million** programme participants across the country have been oriented on COVID-19, including 226,907 persons with disabilities.
- **4.3 million** voice messages with preventive information on COVID-19 have been sent to microfinance clients.
- **1.2 million** hygiene products have been distributed to staff and communities.
- **133,509 BRAC staff** have been oriented on COVID-19 through BRAC's online orientation sessions with healthcare experts and training modules.
- **4,545 hand sanitisers were produced by BRAC's skills development programme and BRAC University's Department of Pharmacy.** These have been distributed to rickshaw pullers, street hawkers, and street vendors in Dhaka. 480 have been given to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University's (BSMMU) Department of Endocrinology. Additionally, 87,500 hand sanitisers have been purchased and are being distributed across the country by Bangladesh Scouts. 7,500 bottles will be distributed through BRAC.



Strengthening of systems

- **BRAC handed over its 430-room learning centre at Ashkona to the government** today (16 April) to use as a quarantine facility for returnee migrants. The location of the facility is adjacent to the Hajj camp and opposite of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Screening and medical assistance will be done by the Bangladesh Army Medical Corps, with the Engineer Battalion providing security and administrative support.
- **BRAC is working with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a2i, Community Based Health Care (CBHC) and UN agencies** to support the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to reduce the burden on hospitals (as mild to moderate cases can be monitored at home) and reduce chances of transmission at community level. BRAC's network of 50,000 community health workers will work with government-led community support teams at the union level to support the verification of clusters of COVID-19 through targeted door-to-door visits to households of potential cases, case identification, and reducing stigma surrounding COVID-19. They will also provide guidance on home quarantine and distribute essential medical packages for supportive treatment.
- **All 41 of BRAC's maternity centres are staying open during the lockdown** to provide maternity healthcare and normal delivery services to pregnant mothers. **203,133 pregnant women** have been provided with individual counselling and services during this crisis period, by our frontline health workers and facility-based healthcare providers.
- **11 lab technicians of BRAC's TB control programme** in Lakshmipur, Cumilla, Brahmanbaria, Bhola, Patuakhali, Khulna, Narail and Chattogram have been included in the government's response team to collect samples from suspected COVID-19 cases in those regions. The programme's frontline staff are also continuing to provide essential TB services across Bangladesh, including routine follow-ups, distribution of medicine, the identification of passive cases and access to life-saving information on COVID-19.
- **BRAC, among other NGO partners, are supporting the government in establishing and operating COVID-19 testing kiosks across the country.** The walk-in testing booths will ensure proper hygiene standards and the required physical distance between lab technicians and suspected patients. Each booth will be sanitised after each sample is collected.
- **25,365** calls have been answered by doctors recruited by BRAC to support IEDCR's 24-hour teleconsultation hotline.



Food security, and social and economic recovery

- **BRAC's microfinance programme is refunding savings of BDT 1 billion to its clients.** A total of 500,000 selected households in Bangladesh, based on their level of vulnerability, will receive a refund of BDT 2,000 (USD 24) from their general savings account to cope with the economic shocks from the shutdown. 52% of the initial 150,000 clients will receive the amount in their bKash wallet.
- **9,140 households living in poverty in urban areas have been provided with essential supply packages by BRAC.** These packages include 7kg rice, 1kg lentil, 1 litre of edible oil, 1kg salt, 2kg flour, two bars of soap, and 500 grams of detergent powder. Out of the total households provided with essentials, 7,500 were supported by DFAT and Standard Chartered Bank, and 1,640 were supported by BRAC's urban development programme.



Partnerships

- **BDT 1.73 crore (USD 203,691) was donated by the employees of BRAC Bank.** The bank's management staff have donated two days' salary and non-management staff have donated one days' salary.
- **PepsiCo and BRAC are partnering to provide food and essentials to 3,700 households** for four weeks.
- **Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs (DFAT) and BRAC have entered their third phase of partnership.** This new phase aims to reduce the risks of COVID-19 through food assistance, and enable better assessment of the situation in Bangladesh. Under this partnership, we have been providing food support, and have established a distance learning platform for students through live television broadcasts. BRAC will collectively support more than 33,000 households during these phases.
- Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and UNHCR are providing support for the COVID-19 response in Cox's Bazar, **for both the Rohingya and host communities**, through BRAC's humanitarian crisis management programme. UNICEF is also providing support, with a particular focus on ensuring children's learning and wellbeing.



FROM THE GROUND

Chompa's three children are hungry, and they do not understand why their mother is not feeding them. Chompa, rationing whatever food they have, has to make a difficult decision. Should she cook in the morning, or evening?

She and her husband have had no work for the last 20 days, and have spent the little savings they had. Chompa used to work in another house in her village. Her husband, Badsha, is an assistant to a local carpenter. Their family of five is completely dependent on their daily incomes.

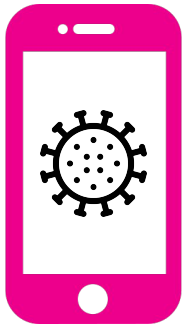
Sadly, this is the reality for families living in hundreds and thousands of villages in Bangladesh - where almost 18 million people live in extreme poverty. This virus has completely changed the dynamics of rural communities in Bangladesh. For millions of families, COVID-19 is a pandemic of hunger.

Millions more like Chompa will struggle to feed their families tonight.

Chompa, a recipient of BRAC's cash support initiative, lives in a village in Sirajganj, of north-central Bangladesh. This story was collected by Mst Kamrun Naher, zonal manager of BRAC's ultra-poor graduation programme.



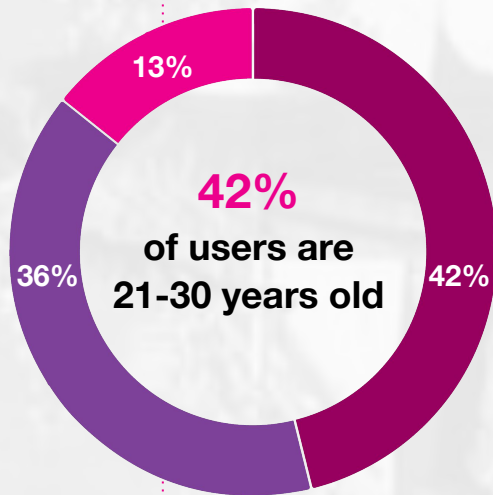
Coronarodh



More than **6,000** people have used **Coronarodh**, BRAC's mobile app that helps check symptoms of COVID-19.



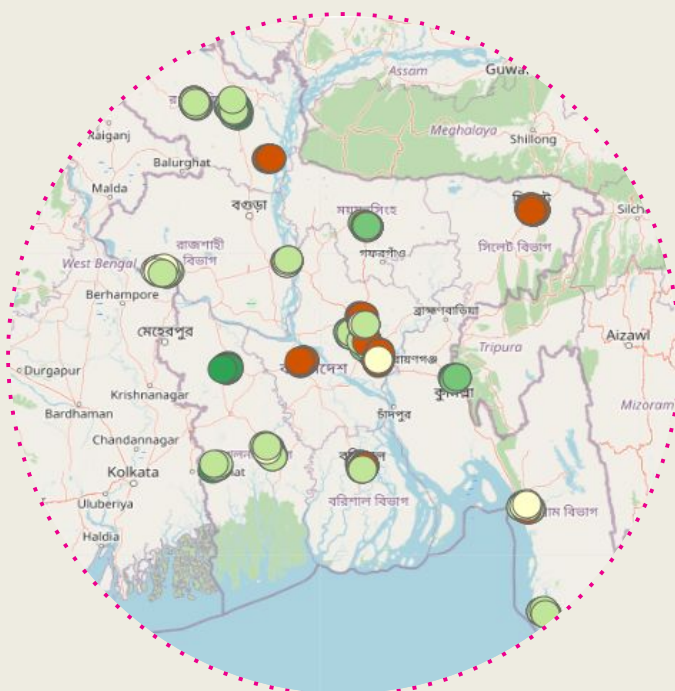
41 - 50
years old



31 - 40
years old

13% of users (705) were found in the high risk category.

Dhaka, Narayanganj, Cumilla, Chattogram, Sylhet, Munshiganj, Kishoreganj, Jhenaidah and Mymensingh



The urban slum map

15 organisations have agreed to contribute to BRAC's urban slum map. **Seven** of those are actively contributing already.

It is hoped that the map will help inform coordination and planning of relief efforts for individuals and organisations by identifying households that are the most in need, and avoid duplication in distribution: <http://urbanslummap.brac.net/>



Partners



Global Affairs
Canada



Contact us at covid19response@brac.net