



COVID19 Response and updates from Experience

Sida supported projects:17

Manusher Jonno Foundation

As on 2nd April 2020

Updates on Present COVID-19 situation at partners working area:

COVID situation and impact at partners working are:

Partners collected information from local administration and health complex. Updated information up to 1st April 2020. The ongoing public holiday was declared by the government in order to ensure people stay home, maintain social distancing from each other and avoid crowds and gatherings. The public holiday which began on 26 March, has been extended up till 11 April. The government has also quarantined several areas/districts in a number of districts of the country. The district and upazila administrations are enforcing this, with support from the police and army.

Partner organization	District	Upazila/city corporation	Infected	Isolation	Quarantine	Death
17	16	17	3	7	3590	2

Though information in number is low but there is a big chance of community transformation of the COVID19 due to millions of people who going back to their respective village or hometown. Partners are planning community led responses, including neighborhood volunteer groups and youth volunteer, teachers or others helping to inform the public on the risks and needed steps. This participatory disaster response strategies, including working with civil society, government is proven success several times in Bangladesh. Building trust between government and citizens, including through strong communications and focusing on reaching vulnerable communities with the information and food or livelihood they need.

- Bangladesh needs to thoroughly assess possible economic crisis and disruptions following a full-scale attack of the disease in pandemic form. Most climate vulnerable people are depended on daily income, they are in huge threat to the consequences of C 19 crisis, as they don't have any alternative livelihoods. RMG is another sector which has emerged as one of the most prominent one in its economy. The Asian Development Bank said

yesterday that the country's economy will suffer a lot if there is a significant coronavirus outbreak. This warning came on the 9th day of the nationwide shutdown aimed at slowing down the spread of the highly transmissible disease. However, the shutdown suspends many economic activities and puts thousands of jobs at risk. Person with disabilities, single women, women headed family, small business group, ethnic community, socially excluded community, dalit are at most vulnerable situation in terms of their basic entitlements.

Corona Preventive awareness:

Commonly partners are doing Corona preventive awareness activities and distributing hygiene kits in their respective working area. Those are miking, using hand loudspeaker with preventive cautionary information, hanging festoons/placards at open area like local market/courtyard/road, leaflet distribution followed by govt & WHO info kit, uploaded documentary - infographic in social media for youth and adolescent, use community radio mostly at climate prone area. Miking and community radio playing very important role and very much effective to reach grassroot community. Other than that distributing sanitizer, musk, soap, gloves. But all most all local shops are found closed and even hygiene items are not enough in terms of requirement and plan.

[https://www.who.int/bangladesh/emergencies/coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-update](https://www.who.int/bangladesh/emergencies/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-update)

<https://www.facebook.com/manusherjonnofoundation/videos/651982058953543/>

<https://www.facebook.com/mohsin.mejba/videos/3110012809017033/>

GBV issue:

- Domestic violence issues are increasing as informed by community and women group leaders. Reported cases are 26 and this is one-week information. It is obvious that women specially are likely to be hardest hit, they are front line health worker, women shoulder the huge burden of unpaid care which increased dramatically. Children's are at home, caring sick of elders, always be attentive for husband's happiness and serve for him with special care. There are every possibility adolescent young women and girls are abusing at their home by close one. These all are happening due to the result of forced enforcement to stay at home to check the spread of coronavirus in the country. As domestic violence is rooted in power and control and most male members are exercising that staying at home. Other than that, it would close women's avenues to escape violence such as by relocating to their natal homes/in laws home or contacting the local people. This also exposed women to other forms of violence. If the lockdown is for long time then government must ensure resources to help women in distress, health services to women specially for reproductive and sexual health including essential services. Partners project staff and social support group leaders, women leaders are keeping regular communication to solve the family conflict, domestic violence and counselling support over phone. And they are also encouraging them to report or inform the GBV cases for solution on regular basis. Women need to be at ease to make calls for help. Women need

privacy and safe place to call or inform, as the entire family is at home, it is difficult for them to call the volunteer or women leaders. So, even we do not receive much information that does not mean that violence's are not happening or stopped.

- Project staffs are also dealing regarding social stigma associated with corona virus, sexual and economic torture other than that mental and physical violence, family conflict over phone. Mobile phone is the only option to communicate with community and grassroots women leaders. Partners are also raising voice to keep active all hot line numbers to address the GBV issues immediately.

COVID 19 impact on Garments Workers:

- Manusher Jonno Foundation received an appeal from Awaj Foundation where seeking donations for an emergency fund for workers who have lost their jobs. They are planning to disburse cash transfer to make sure that their basic needs for food and shelter are met. Awaj Foundation and Karmajibi Nari indicated that both will also continue to provide some health services and will connect workers with other resources when they need more intensive help. MJF still in process to find what unspent amount project have. After that MJF management will decide. The BGMEA is continuously monitoring the situation in garment factories. <https://www.fairwear.org/covid-19-dossier/covid-19-guidance-for-production-countries/covid-19-impact-and-responses-bangladesh/>
 - <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2020/03/23/rubana-urges-buyers-to-take-ready-apparel-goods-bgmea-bkmea-urge-workers-to-remain-patient>

Liaison with local government and local administration:

- Partners are maintaining good relationship and liaison with local government and local administration. Because NGOs should have to work with coordinated effort at district/upazilla level administration, so that everyone have common information who is doing what. Local government represents are also seeking support from PNGOs like cash and kind support. Partners are implementing emergency response with close cooperation at local level.

Partners COVID 19 response and observation:

MJF did a quick assessment among 17 partners and collected information on present local situation and accordingly partners plan to address COVID 19 as preventive measures. Only seven partners planned and revised their budget from unspent activity. Most of the activities like mass gathering, courtyards meeting, training, regular group meeting has to postpone due to outbreak C19. Local administration issued a circular not to organize any kind of meeting, gathering or any event. So, partners planned to do something with this unspent money to make people aware. Which already shared as 1st response plan and risk status report. Partners are continuing preventive awareness activity with the permission of local government. They have regular communication with beneficiaries and all relevant stakeholders to keep close contact by maintaining social distancing. Partners are facing major problems in terms of non-availability of hygiene materials and dry food. Low income people

are going to experience extreme poverty within few days. That would be great challenge. Now partners are planning for 2nd response plan for mid to long term response plan based on this March-May quarter unspent amount of budget. This revised budget forecast will share with Sida soon, when it finalizes once.

Budget forecast for the quarter March-May:

- Bottom line budget under every component will remain unchanged. Partners revised their budget by adjusting unspent amount against current quarter activity considering those are mostly couldn't shift in near future. So, revised budget plan and budget will only change as per alternative work plan. MJF is also identifying area of activity which will not be possible to implement by May 2020. Revised forecast (March -May) with alternative work plan will share soon. Partners are in remote place and staying at home and they have very limited internet support, taking time to provide information.

MJF's Decisions and proposal: based on partners requirements:

- MJF is giving priority on most marginalized peoples requirements, person with disabilities specially women and ethnic, socially excluded, old age, single parent, pregnant, those who are most vulnerable and high-risk group due to COVID 19. MJF is observing the situation to re plan and revise budget for addressing the country epidemic/crisis, which will be most beneficial for most marginalized people. Hope component wise bottom line budget will not change. revised forecast budget and changed work plan will share once finalize from MJF side.
- MJF management has decided to support on emergency livelihood's necessity and midterm livelihood support for GBV and climate change vulnerable people mostly women and young girls where required.
- MJF will avoid duplication and making a contingency plan under different program component head which is still under process.
- MJF is allowing partners to buy necessary safety equipment's for their personal use, so that can work for vulnerable participants by maintaining social distancing.
- Usually MJF support only targeted beneficiaries but considering this unprecedented pandemic MJF rethink and decided to support other most vulnerate people based on certain set criteria, like old and age and sick people, socially excluded, person with disabilities, especially women and girls.
- Considering COVID 19 situation purchase and procurement may treat flexible, but partners should take prior permission from MJF.
- As local administration suggested (in few cases) to provide cash or kind support in their basket, MJF is decided to allow partners to go with local government by keeping proper documents. Otherwise partner will face difficulties locally in near future.
- As phone is only communication media for project staff it may increase case by case on actual basis, not in general. Because partners will have to manage GBV case and family conflicts.

Major dropped activities by Partners:

Mass gathering, Dialogue with Parents, cross Learning Visit, awareness sessions with male workers, regular group meetings and orientations, Meeting and dialogue of AHC Members & Factory Management, Preparatory Meeting with Factory Management to form anti sexual harassment committee, Refresher Training on WHR, Gender & GBV for women Leaders, Community Score Card (CSC), Courtyard meeting with men, women, youth and adolescent groups, School college session and campaign, Dialogue with parents on prevention of child marriage and dowry, Two days long gender and women human rights training for the members of social support groups, Female Football , Youth/adolescent Gathering, Dialogue with service providing institutions, participatory vulnerability assessment, community level meetings, public hearing, interface meetings, dialogues, UDMC (Union Disaster Management Committee) follow up etc., Training on fund management, Farmers gathering, Early summer vegetable cultivation, Exposure visit, meeting with UzDMC (Upazilla Disaster Management Committee), Dialogue meeting among DMC's, Civil Society, Public administration ,IGA Fund, District level dialogue with Govt etc.

Challenges/limitations

- Enforce social distancing in Bangladesh like a densely populated country
- Non-availability /limited supply of dry food, grocery, and hygiene materials.
- Limited internet facilities create barriers and makes information flow slow
- Maintain procurement system perfectly.
- Support may need to give non-targeted but most vulnerable community people
- Prepare a proper plan due to uncertain C 19 outbreak and enough appropriate available information on vulnerable people and disaggregated data
- Taking time for preparing contingency plan for mid and long term due to limited internet communication, as most of project staff are living at village and remote place.
- Gender impact and consequences are not getting priority and still ignored
- Lives and livelihoods of the climate vulnerable households and income options have been affected seriously and it will be more critical if the situation continues.

COVID 19 outbreak Response

MJF have decided to response on the pandemic because this is an extraordinary emergency that demands an extraordinary response. Considering the impact of COVID 19 MJF is going to distribute emergency food package distribution immediately and midterm livelihood support for most vulnerable community through partners. MJF is planning and working to identify advocacy issues in relation to COVID 19.

- Partners are helping people to minimize the risk of infection by providing them with accurate information and advice locally by using mike, using hand loudspeakers for local people.
- MJF and Partners will follow uniformity for emergency food distribution package among most vulnerable marginalized and climate vulnerable household and destitute women in terms of old age, sick, single, pregnant and violence survivors.
- Primarily total 16398 households have been selected to provide emergency food support and 9294 are female out of them, all of them aren't targeted beneficiaries under project, few of them are old age, pregnant, women with disabilities, and single parent category. Final scrutiny of selection process is going on. Preparing revised forecast budget and plan for March-May quarter. Total project beneficiaries' number are 26026.
- Partners are requested to very cautious to avoid duplications and maintain proper selection process and planning. Though all climate change partners and few GBV partners have experience to address in emergency public health work and preparedness planning during emergency.
- COVID 19 reminds that we all deserve to be treated equally and have the same basic rights.