



ডিসাস্টার ফোরাম



A position paper form humanitarian NGO network of BDCSOProcess, Disaster Forum, NAHAB and NIRAPAD in the context of COVID19 Crisis in Bangladesh.

Inclusive coordination, social mobilization and Local leadership are indispensable to mitigate the COVID 19 crisis in Bangladesh

1. COVID 19 and Bangladesh Response.

The world is watching with anxiety and great concern the emergence of a new kind of coronavirus. COVID-19 has been declared a global pandemic and the first case of Covid-19 in Bangladesh was detected on 8 March 2020. So far, the country has detected 1838 confirmed cases of Covid-19, of whom, 75 have died and 58 have recovered after treatment as of April 17, 2020. The number is increasing daily.

Countries all over the world are struggling to manage this global crisis. Bangladesh is no different. But since it is already struggling to provide a basic health care infrastructure in one of the most densely populated countries in the world, this global pandemic will be a major challenge. In the case of natural disasters like earthquakes or flood and cyclones, only a limited number of countries in a region come out as being affected. Earthquakes are normally limited to single countries. But when the disaster is a worldwide pandemic, and continues to careen towards becoming cataclysmic, the scenario unveils itself in a different style. A great economic crisis starts brewing and, later, begins simmering, in a lot of countries after the initial shock of the epidemics' onslaught is tided over. Bangladesh is not new to disasters or major humanitarian crises. Sitting astride a river delta at the bottom of the Himalayan range, the country is fighting a longstanding battle against the impact of climate change and currently hosts the world's largest refugee camp along its southern border.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is a crisis of a completely different magnitude and one that will require a response of unprecedented scale.

Bangladesh's leaders in the public and private sector must come together to respond to the immediate threats to health systems and the long-term effects to the country's economy.

Bangladesh has shown capacity to respond, as it has when confronted with climate and other

disasters. However, addressing the pandemic is completely a new area and needs completely different intervention but NGOs has the capacity of reorganizing the things to addressed the change needs.

According to needs assessment working group findings, highlight that the ongoing COVID-19 response and resulting implications have increased vulnerability of already identified at-risk groups.

The response so far is admirable, yet this pandemic also poses an economic and humanitarian crisis. While many countries have made good starts in stimulus packages, Bangladesh has been slower to react. The Prime Minister initially announced an emergency stimulus package of \$600 million (equivalent to 0.2% of GDP) on 25 March, which on 4 April was enhanced significantly to \$8.5 billion (equivalent to 2.5% of GDP). These packages including support to industries, boost up agricultural production and providing food support to the families at high risk.

2. NGO responses.

The Covid-19 has brought a dramatic slowdown in the overall life style and economy of the world. Bangladesh has also been affected by this crisis. People across the country are now passing days with biggest panic. Due to the government's declaration of closure, unpredicted sufferings have come to the daily life of people of Bangladesh and depends on daily income. The National and Local NGOs are providing support all over the country from the beginning of the crisis. Coordinating with the local government at district and upazila level the NGOs are creating awareness, providing health, water and sanitation service as well as distributing





food to the most high-risk people. As the situation become more critical and need health intervention the NGOs trained doctors and health service providers to provide community-based service. To confirm the security of the health service providers they also provide PPE and all these interventions was made through their own funding. The funding is a big gap for the national and local NGOs. Two

national NGOs provide their hospital for the COVID 19 patient treatment.

The National/ Local NGOs are staying at local level and have access to every corner of the country. Most of the NGOs also have the response team. To reinforce the initiatives of the National and Local NGO who could demonstrate capacity in COVID19 response, so far from Pool Fund arrangement BDT 5.78 crore was released by Start Fund for 23 districts and 09 National/Local NGOs are providing support. OXFAM also released BDT 1.47 crore to 25 National/Local to respond COVID 19 response. Many districts and people at remote locations are yet reach.

At local level and national level in terms of community sensitization for containing spread, testing and health services, emergency supplies – Hygiene and Food package – Coordination and distribution, Limiting peoples access to the regular health services and National and Local NGOs with the support from the department of health services can provide this support.

The humanitarian impact is likely to be among already at-risk ethnic community groups low-income families, people with disabilities, returnee migrant workers, informal and low wage earners such as daily women headed household, transgender and sex worker and tea plantation workers. As restrictions continue, further impact food production and supply chains, the most vulnerable groups will be an of food availability and diversity – with considerable implications for needs.

The basic gaps which need to be address immediately

- Inclusive coordination mechanism hardly available in upazila level and which is acute in urban setting. Inclusive means participation of all sector of people including NGOs and CSOs.

- Lack of systematic preparation and response,
- Little of targeted approach toward marginalized section of people,
- Mass people should have confidence on the official information provided.

3. Bangladesh situation may worst more.

Normally Bangladesh move to disaster season from end of March and continue till end of November. This includes cyclone, flood, landslide, river erosion as well as dengue. If unfortunately, any of this natural disaster occurred at this moment the situation will be more worsen to combat. It would be very difficult to combat Maintaining the social distance in the evacuation center will be completely difficult. Providing relief and support without the local organization will be more difficult.

Social and economic impact (short, medium and long term) of COVID19, compounded by national disasters in various regions and years (2020 and next years).

4. Localization can be an effective way out as local and national NGOs proven record as first responders.

The response to COVID-19 highlights the urgent need for further concrete actions to be taken to support a more structured approach to localization of the humanitarian system. Initial planning for the GHRP has recognized that the response will be highly dependent on local and national actors, as international staff are restricted from travel or unable to freely deploy to field operations, global logistics are fragmented, and organizations expect to face many additional challenges to their usual ways of working. This represents a significant shift from existing practice in the international humanitarian system, which is still highly dependent upon the surge of international staff between emergencies and the relatively-free flow of relief items and expertise in many different areas.

The one of the major ways to relieve from COVID 19 is social distance and stay at home. Most of the countries including Bangladesh introduce lock down. This banned the movements of vehicles and people. The only way is to support by the local and community people with safety and security.

Localization is an idea derived from World Humanitarian Summit discourse (2014 to 2016) finally which has been agreed and announced from the Grand Bargain (May 2016) commitment, contain 10 streams and 51 indicators, where streams on Transparency, Localization, Participation

Revolution are prominent. All UN agencies, major donors countries and major INGO has agreed on the commitment, and through C4C (Charter for Change) all most all major INGOs has taken furtherance approach in this regard. In this path UN agencies has taken NWoW (New Way of Working) specially to work in triangle approach, i.e., human and development approach in anchoring in sustainable forces in locality.

Meantime discourse on localization has got furtherance on this eve of COVID 19 crisis, the response seems very much depend on locals, as people movement have been made limited, in most cases expatriates have been barred from moving in the field. International network like ICVA, A4EP and NEAR gave calls and released position papers in this regard, in ICVAs paper they have used the term Reinforce three time in respect of localization. UNHCR chief Filip Grandi issued a letter where he give importance on local actor and urged his organization to show more flexibility in this regard. It is important to increase WASH activates, awareness and COVID 19 screening in the camp.

The National and Local NGOs are active in COVID 19 response as follows: Following are few examples in various divisions.

National and regions : ADAB, ASA, BRAC, BURO Bangladesh, CARITAS, CCDB, Community Development Center (CODEC), COAST Trust, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Friends In Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB), FNB, Gono Unnayan Prochesta (GUP), TMSS, Gono Systha Kendra (GSK), Padakhep Manobik Unnayan Kendra (Padakhep), People's Oriented Program Implementation, (POPI), Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS), Resource Integration Centre (RIC), Uttara Development Program Society (UDPS), Village Education Resource Center (VERC).

Dhaka Division: AKK, ARBAN Netrokona, Association for Integrated Development, ASPADA Mymensing, BFF, Center for Disability and Development (CDD), CSS, Disha, DISHA Mirpur, DNP, DMB, FDA, HELP-Bangladesh, KHRDS keraniganj, Manob Mukti Songostha (MMS), National Development Program (NDP), PAPRI, PCC, PDAP, PHP Kishorgonj, Rural Advancement Association (SERAA), Sajida Foundation, Shariatpur Development Society (SDS), Sobujer Jonno Fondation, Somaj Unnoyan Karjocrom (SUK), Sabolamby Unnayan Samity (SUS), Narsingdi. SUS, TUS Mymensing, Shishu Protiva Biksh Kendra, Integrated Environmental Development Society Netrokona, SODEP, SDC, PW, Sebe Foundation, Uddayon Shangha, Shabolombi Unnayan Somity, SERA, Sramagibi Unnayan Shongstha.

Barisal Division: Amra Kaj Kori (AKK), AROHI, Association of Voluntary Actions for Society – AVAS, Bhola Intervillage Development Association (BIDA), Chandradip Development Society (CDS), CHDP Patuakhali, JAGO NARI, Love Thy Neighbour (LTN), Nazrul Smriti Sangsad (NSS), Society Development Agency (SDA), Sangram (Sangathitha Gramunyan

Karmashuchi), Protibondhi Unnayan Shongstha.

Sylhet Division: Reliant Women Development Organization (RWDO), Rural Advancement Society (RAS), AWARD, SKSS, RWDO, Jalalabal Foundation.

Rangpur Division: Association for Alternative Development (AFAD), CDDF, CSDK, ESDO, Garib Unnayan Sangstha (GUS), Mahideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity (MJSKS), Rural Society Development Association (RSDA), Village Initiatives for Empowerment of Women (VIEW), Ranpur Protibondi Foundation, SOLIDARITY, GUK, SKS Foundation, Ananna Sangstha Dinajpur. Come to Work, Dinajpur, Manishika Lalmonirhat, SKS Foundation, ASAB, Aso Jibon Gori

Khulna Division: Agoroni Chakra Foundation, AID Jhenaidaha, Al-Meraj Foundation, Ashtray Foundation, Coastal Development Partners (CDP), DAS, Desh Chetona, DESHA Kustia, Leaders, Rupantor, Sushilon, RDC Jhinaidah, Nabalok Parishod, Jhinaidah, Satkhira, ROVA Foundation Magura, IDEAL, SETU, SWACO Jhenaidaha, SEHEO, Uttaran.

Chottogram division : Abeda Mannan Foundation, ACLAB, Agrajatra, Bright Bangladesh Forum Chattaogram, CoDeC, DUS Hatiya, Ghashful, MUKTI, NRDS, PHALS, PULSE, Sagorika Somaj Unnayan Kendra, PAGE Cumilla, OPCA, Ornob, YPSA.

Rajshahi division: Asyra, Banchte Chai Samaj Unnayan Samity, Bogura, BSDO Naogaon, BSUS, Deep Shikha, DMSS, Esho, Jamuna Manob Kalyan Sangsta, JAKOS Foundation, JRDM, LOFS, Palli Unnayan Prokalpo, Natore, Polli Unnayan Prokalpo, Bogura, Uddipan, OSED, Pabna, IFBC Foundation, Chapai Nababgonj, PNP Sirajgonj, Nida Society, NSKS, RSDF, Seba Foundation, SETU, Shapla Sathi, SKS Foundation, SKSS, SUK, Upama Samaj Unnayan Sangstha, Joypurhat.

On top of these names, there are numerous other NGOs are also responding country wide, as because of communication disruptions we have not been able to collect all those names. Most of them acting on their own resources. These NGOs are part of the humanitarian networks, BDCSOPROCESS, Disaster Forum, NAHAB and NIRAPAD. And they are also part of sectoral network ADAB, FNB and CDF.

5. Action needed.

1. Restoring public healthcare system ensuring general peoples access to regular medical services
2. Capacity strengthening and protective support to local health teams (both public and private) to deal with COVID19 crisis
3. Widespread testing arrangement and decentralization at local level within reach of general people

4. Strengthening District and Upzilla level coordination mechanism based on local needs and contexts.
5. Considering the WHS commitments development partners, UN agencies and INGOs should directly provide resources to national/ local NGOs directly.
6. International organizations can only involve in technical support and monitoring.
7. Considering the natural disasters option for evacuation and providing support and contingency plan by the local organization for the community.
8. Advocate for integrating and applying accountability elements and sphere standards (the minimum support in assistance delivery to the communities).
9. Ensure access to social safety nets and other supports provided by GoB for the people who are in need of supports.
10. To ensure continuation of agriculture, ensure credit facilities for farmers. MFI can take a big roles. The agriculture sector and people at risk need support and National / Local NGOs can reschedule the loan, providing soft loan as well as distribution of incentive announced by the government.
11. Access to right information in right time with understandable language
12. Arranging Pooled Fund at both national level and local level (NAHAB position paper on Resource Mobilization can be used as reference to illustrate this point, CCNF has proposed separate NGO pooled for rohingya response in Coxsbazar)



The current humanitarian context can be used as a critical moment to advance the localisation agenda in Bangladesh even further. Given the mobility restrictions, as well as limits on international travel, donors and international organizations will need to actively support local organizations taking the lead in the response effort. This can include (but should not be limited to), agreeing to only mobilize local surge resources, all projects funded under the response plan to only recruit local staff, increase direct funding to local organizations, increasing cluster and HCTT representation of local organizations, and increasing use of local language in response coordination efforts.

In association with



Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh

Please Contact

Abdul Latif Khan (01713063302), AKM Jashim Uddin 01712171436
 Dr. M. Ehsanur Rahman (01713000861), Hasina Akter Mita (01739416116)
 Gawher Nayeem Wahra (01713005883) Md. Rafiqul Islam (01993308461)
 Rezaul Karim Chowdhury (01711529792)