



# Responding to COVID-19: Community Preparedness and Management of Public Health Emergency

## A sub-project under ARISE for emergency response to COVID-19

*“Responding to COVID-19: Community Preparedness and Management of Public Health Emergency”* is a sub-project under the ARISE project supported by ARISE Responsive Fund. This project was co-designed and jointly implemented by ARISE project’s research partner BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University, community mobilization partner BRAC Urban Development Programme (UDP) and the community. This project interventions were designed based on the findings of the COVID-19 research of the ARISE project to address the urgent health needs of the marginalized communities living in informal urban settlements, support them to be more resilient to public health emergencies and to promote health and hygiene practice among the people living in urban informal communities in the context of COVID-19 pandemic era.

**Project duration:** January 2021 to March 2022

**Project location:** Nama Shyampur in Dhaka city, Green Land in Khulna city and Baje Kazla in Rajshahi city.

**Project design:** The project followed a public-private-community partnership approach in close partnership with the community and local level stakeholders including Ward Councilors to implement all activities. Besides, to ensure community participation in all stages of interventions’ implementation, the project recruited Community Organisers (COs) from the same informal settlements who worked as the bridge between the community and project teams and carried out project’s community-based activities. The Community Development Organizations (CDOs) – local community-based committees formed with the support

of BRAC UDP in the respective project sites played a pivotal role in the execution of the project activities.

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES

#### Installation of handwashing devices:



ARISE provided financial and technical supports to the CDOs in installing handwashing devices in the project sites to support community with handwashing practice. More than 3000 families have been benefitted from 12 handwashing devices installed in three project sites.

#### Distribution of reusable face masks:



The Community Organizers (COs), with the support of CDOs and household level small groups (Primary Groups – PGs) and through participatory wealth ranking process, identified very poor marginalized people and households who needed assistance for accessing face masks. A total of 58000 reusable face masks were distributed among the marginalized people in the project operational areas.

#### **Distribution of soap and washing powder:**



The Community Organizers (COs), with the support of CDOs, distributed more than 18,000 packets of soap and detergent powders among 4000 most marginalized families.

#### **Health Hygiene and COVID-19 awareness training for the CDOs and ward committee leaders:**



Health, hygiene and COVID-19 awareness, and leadership trainings were provided to 145 CDO and ward committee members to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills for supporting their community in the pandemic management. They also assisted Community Organizers (COs) in COVID-19 awareness campaign.

#### **Health, hygiene and COVID-19 awareness campaign:**



The project team and the Community Organizers (COs) co-designed posters, leaflets and stickers with COVID-19 awareness messages. COs, with the support of local youth volunteers, door-to-door distributed those awareness materials. The COVID-19 awareness messages were also disseminated through miking.

#### **Organization of health camps:**



ARISE project organized nine health camps in each project site for providing primary health care and referral support to the marginalized people who cannot access and afford healthcare services from the formal healthcare providers. In those health camps, medical doctors provided free health check-ups and medicine to more than 1200 people.

#### **Organization of Covid-19 vaccine registration camps:**



This project organized COVID-19 vaccine camps in the project sites to aware people living in those informal settlements about COVID-19 vaccine and assist with vaccine registration in Surokha (online COVID-19 vaccine registration portal of the Government of Bangladesh). More than 560 people registered for the COVID-19 vaccination through this initiative.

#### **Health and rights education sessions:**



The Community Organizers (COs) organized and facilitated 220 health and rights education sessions in small groups (Primary Groups) where they discussed different important public health and rights related issues – COVID-19 symptoms, preventive measures and treatment facilities, pregnant mothers' health and nutrition during, child nutrition, violence against women, child marriage, gender equality, sexual harassment, Dengue, etc. They also demonstrated correct use of face masks and proper handwashing techniques.

Funded by



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