SAJIDA FOUNDATION IN THE FRONTLINE TO TACKLE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Covid-19 Bulletin
4th Edition
15th May, 2020
It has been more than two months since the Government of Bangladesh initiated lockdown protocols to protect the lives of its citizens. The effects of these measures however, have been devastating; disrupting the livelihood of 85% of the workforce engaged in the informal economy. Additionally, the economy is being hammered by bulk cancellation of garment factory orders and reduced remittance inflow due to large scale job losses of our migrant workers. Agriculture value chains have been hugely disrupted and the country is faced with a huge challenge due to poor health infrastructure, and lack of coordination among different stakeholders in dealing with this unknown pandemic. Moreover, challenges in dealing with the urban extreme poor seem far complex due to a lack of their data in the national system and safety nets.

We, at SAJIDA Foundation, have been working tirelessly to address the impact of COVID-19 crisis. Our interventions have largely covered frontline healthcare service through hospitals and remote consultations, mental health interventions, food and hygiene package distribution, agriculture value chain support, and community awareness programs. While we strengthen our existing initiatives, it is pertinent to introduce new approaches given that the Government of Bangladesh has gradually started to reopen the economy. Our primary focus would be on integrated interventions for urban extreme poor, livelihood and skills initiatives primarily addressing migrant and garment workers, community based health interventions using technology with referral mechanisms, mental health support, and WASH. Our secondary areas would be climate change, education, and agriculture among others in the next few years.

On the other hand, SAJIDA has partially opened its Microfinance operations from the second week of May to provide support to this segment of our population who are greatly immersed in cash flow crunches.

We recognize that the COVID-19 crisis requires a united action in response and we thank our partners and supporters at different levels for their unyielding support. I want to take this opportunity to recognise the empathy, commitment and hard work of SAJIDA family working tirelessly as a unit, and we are obligated to continue to do so.

Until next time!

Zahida Fizza Kabir
SAJIDA Foundation - Making a Difference in the COVID-19 Crisis

Areas served: 26 Districts
Total population served: 3,057,959

### Frontline healthcare services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18,659</td>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) sets distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Medical personnel have received training from DGHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Samples collected from suspected COVID-19 patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>COVID-19 patients treated through SAJIDA’s Quarantine and Isolation centre in Narayanganj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,896</td>
<td>General patients treated through SAJIDA’s hospital in Keraniganj</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Remote healthcare services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,527</td>
<td>Mental health tele-consultation provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>General medical consultation provided through SAJIDA 24/7 doctor hotline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,350</td>
<td>Participants reached in mental health Facebook Live sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,711</td>
<td>Users accessed SAJIDA’s messenger chatbot and symptom checker to get preliminary diagnosis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Community awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>389,259</td>
<td>Individuals made aware on health and hygiene practices through different mediums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,007,616</td>
<td>Individuals made aware on COVID-19 through phone calls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Protection mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>484</td>
<td>Portable handwashing devices installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,282,189</td>
<td>People used handwashing devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Waste bins delivered to RMG factories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Food and hygiene packages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>233,450</td>
<td>Individuals received food and hygiene packages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Market linkage facilitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,757</td>
<td>Farmers and consumers connected with forward market to receive fair prices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Updated on May 15, 2020)
SAJIDA’s Agriculture Unit deployed a timely initiative to support the livelihoods of vulnerable agriculture and dairy farmers who have been severely impacted by the economic disruption resulting from the pandemic. The nationwide lockdown and restrictions on mobility not only affected sales, but also impeded the access of small farmers to forward market actors. In such a scenario, the Agriculture Unit took quick stock of the farmers’ available produce, gathered them in a central location and packed the produce in 10 kg packages. These packages were then offered to interested buyers. Upon receiving order confirmations from buyers, SAJIDA’s field officers hand delivered the products, collected payment and distributed the money to the farmers. Sale of over 10,000 kgs of gourds, eggplants, okra, tomato, asparagus, green chilli, lemon, sweet pumpkin, fruits and over 12,000 litres of milk has been facilitated by SAJIDA’s Agriculture Unit since the beginning of March.

Vegetables, eggs and other produce grown by members of SAJIDA Foundation were bought and distributed for free to SAJIDA’s beneficiaries. Through this process, food and hygiene packages distribution has been very effective.

Md. Jasim Uddin
Agriculture Officer, SAJIDA Foundation

SAJIDA’s innovative approach supported vulnerable households with emergency relief while protecting livelihoods of small-scale farmers and poultry dairies in the process. To address the breakdown in the supply chain, SAJIDA purchased food items including rice, vegetables, seasonal fruits, milk, and poultry items directly from farmers at a fair price.
These were then packaged and redistributed to vulnerable Microfinance members, daily wage earners, indigenous groups (including Saotal, Pahan, Urao, Barman community of Chapai Nawabganj, Hazong community of Netrokona, Garo community of Netrokona, Sherpur, and Jamalpur) and other ethnic minorities (River Nomad (Bede), Transgender group, Sex-workers, and Bihari community). In locked areas, cash grants were provided to beneficiaries for purchasing food and hygiene material using mobile financial services.

Our livelihood depends largely on going out and collecting funds from people, but the lockdown has restricted our movement for a long time. I received raw food materials but had no money to buy other ingredients for cooking. Receiving cash grant from SAJIDA Foundation was extremely helpful.

Sneha, Member of the Transgender Community, Dhaka

Supporting the Readymade Garments Industry and it’s Workers with “Lost Stock” Clothing Box

SAJIDA Foundation has partnered with Mallzee, a UK multi-retailer shopping app, to launch the 'Lost Stock' initiative. Under this initiative, Mallzee is purchasing garment products from Bangladesh, packaging them into boxes worth GBP 35 and selling it to interested consumer. A portion of the sales proceeds will be transferred to SAJIDA Foundation. The funds will be used to provide food and hygiene packages to vulnerable households. The initiative is aiming to support 100,000 workers by the end of the year.

Frontline Health Support to COVID-19 Patients Through Isolation & ICU Centre

In response to the global pandemic, SAJIDA converted its 50-bed Narayanganj hospital into a COVID-19 dedicated Isolation and ICU centre under an MOU with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). The hospital consists of a four-bed ICU unit including ventilators, two dialysis machines with central oxygen line and a dedicated pool of 90 frontline healthcare workers and support staff.

As of 15th May 2020, a total of 100 patients have been admitted at the centre through DGHS referral. With respect to age composition of the patients, 25 percent belong to the 30-39 years age group, while 22% fall in the 60+ years age group. Currently, 28 patients are undergoing treatment while 60 patients have been discharged after receiving treatment.
Standard Chartered Bank has come forward to support the treatment of COVID-19 patients who are currently availing services from SAJIDA’s COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Center in Narayanganj. Over the next two months, treatment of 40 patients will be partially covered by Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh.

Uninterrupted Support to Regular Patients from Keraniganj Hospital

SAJIDA’s hospital in Keraniganj is one of the few institutions which has continued to serve general patients during this challenging time. Frontline professionals have been equipped with PPEs and extensive disinfection processes are being followed at the hospital premises. Since the 26th of March 26, SAJIDA’s Keraniganj Hospital has provided 4,855 outpatient services. Additionally, another 1,335 patients have been admitted at the hospital for different indications, while 6,444 patients underwent diagnostic services, and doctors performed 262 surgeries, resulting in a total of 12,896 patients served during this period.

Reaching an Unfortunate Milestone in COVID-19 Healthcare

As of 15th May 2020, a total of 100 patients have been admitted to SAJIDA’s COVID-19 Isolation and ICU centre through Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) referral. Currently, 28 patients are undergoing treatment while 60 patients have been discharged after receiving treatment. Unfortunately, 11 patients lost their lives in the battle with COVID-19 while 2 were referred elsewhere. 25% of the patients admitted are in the 30-39-year age group and 22% are above 60 years of age.

“Uninterrupted Support to Regular Patients from Keraniganj Hospital

A number of measures have contributed significantly to uninterrupted hospital services. Some of these are measuring body temperature of every person entering the hospital with infrared thermometer; recording of relevant history by trained paramedics; installation of Covid-19 triage room; and strict maintenance of Infection Prevention and Control guideline.

Md. Harun Or Rashid, Marketing Manager, SAJIDA Hospital, Keraniganj

“Reaching an Unfortunate Milestone in COVID-19 Healthcare

“Summary of patient profile served at Narayanganj COVID-19 Isolation Center

Discharged after cure 60

Undergoing treatment 27

Referred 2

Death 11

Summary of patient profile served at Narayanganj COVID-19 Isolation Center
SAJIDA has channeled the use of contactless paddle-based hand-wash devices in ten slums located in Dhaka South City Corporation. These devices have proven to be popular amongst residents as they are easy to maintain and have already been used by 15,240 slum residents till date. Over the next few weeks, another 30 of these devices will be set up in other slum areas.

Additionally, volunteers appointed by SAJIDA are continuously disinfecting nine slums three times a day by spraying disinfectants. Till now, 23 slums are being continuously disinfected, benefitting 34,909 residents.

Providing Wash Support

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Health Information Hotline

A pool of nine registered doctors are daily attending hotline enquiries around the clock. Till date, 1,217 consultations have been provided on suspected Covid-19 symptoms and other diseases. Around 150 patients have been referred for testing and hospitalization.

As a medical professional, contributing to combating Covid-19 via telemedicine services is new and rewarding at the same time. We are getting different types of cases every day which allow us to reshape our health system more effectively during a time like this.

Dr. Rehnuma Tarannum, Medical Doctor, Health Information Hotline

Working in an ICU is not an easy task as patients fight here for their lives; more so in complicated cases of COVID-19. However, when a patient is cured, the happiness and gratitude of getting their healthy lives back sparkling in their eyes provide me a great sense of achievement.

Dr. Habiba Akter, Medical Officer, ICU of Narayanganj Isolation Center

Chatbot for Covid Response

The COVID-19 messenger chatbot developed by SAJIDA, Renata Pharmaceuticals and Appinion BD Limited has now served 10,128 users. The chatbot portal provides remote diagnosis and access to authentic information portals. New features added to the portal include a blog, which is run by a team in Renata Ltd, and integration with BanglaMeds, the largest online drug delivery platform in Bangladesh.
Rapid Response Survey

SAJIDA Foundation initiated a survey to gather information about the concerns and challenges faced by the urban extreme poor members of its Amrao Manush Program during the lockdown period. The survey was conducted by interviewing 572 beneficiaries based in Dhaka and Chattogram over the phone. Following are some insights that emerged as a result:

- **88%** of the respondents do not currently have any income
- **94%** of the respondents are skipping meals
- **91%** are afraid of getting infected
- **26%** of the respondents were victims of health and coronavirus related harassment
- **55%** of the respondents reported an increase in violence

The initial findings reflect the challenging realities currently plaguing the urban poor. SAJIDA Foundation will draw on these learnings to immediately operationalize necessary interventions. A detailed report on the survey findings will be shared on SAJIDA’s website.

Visit this link to find the survey: [https://bit.ly/2WRbjPH](https://bit.ly/2WRbjPH)

Microfinance Loan Disbursement and Savings Refund in Support of Members

SAJIDA’s Microfinance program resumed field operation on a limited scale from May 10, 2020, after an extended hiatus since March 26 2020, in accordance to the circular issued by Microfinance Regulatory Authority (MRA) and PKSF. Health and safety measures of both staffs and visiting members are being ensured in the form of social distancing and personal hygiene protocols during all the activities. 75% of the branches have started loan disbursement and savings withdrawal services for existing members to support them during this crisis period. So far, loan disbursement of around BDT 200 million and savings withdrawal of approximately BDT 5 million has been completed.
SAJIDA Initiated Social Enterprises

Inner Circle

Clients of Inner Circle have expressed their appreciation of the efficiency with which the Centre’s services have been transitioned to an online system. One of the parents under Inner Circle wrote an article talking about the benefits of doing online therapy, and schooling during this age of quarantine. The article has been shared online on SAJIDA’s social media for other parents to read and benefit from. Accordingly till date, 152 hours of video sessions have been conducted by therapists, benefiting many children with special needs. *As the covid-19 circumstances have stalled services at Inner Circle, a “hybrid model” - a combination of physical and virtual sessions - with higher frequency of virtual sessions, are being proposed and prioritized to battle its effects.* The integration of information technology in delivering such specialized services is unprecedented in Bangladesh.

"The online arrangement for ABA and OT therapy has helped my son to maintain consistency in his progress. He is enjoying the online sessions as the therapists engage him in different interesting assignments. We are also having direct consultation with therapists in online sessions to help our child as much as we can in this COVID-19 situation.

Aneeta Rahman, Parent"

Psychological Health and Wellness Clinic

The Psychological Health and Wellness Clinic (PHWC) has provided 207 on-call and video counselling sessions for its clients alongside organizational support through their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to 6 organizations in the last two weeks. The organization has also on-boarded 2 new organizations for EAP, conducted two webinar sessions for the staffs of URMI Group and MetLife Insurance, and an interactive live session with Banglalink women’s network on addressing mental health issues during lockdown. PHWC has also provided workshop on stress management and anxiety for Plan International reaching 100 of their employees, and reached over 40 of Unicef’s employees this week.

The lead Psychiatrist and MD of PHWC, Dr. Ashique Selim, conducted two interactive Facebook live sessions on Maintenance of Relationships and Depression & Apathy during COVID-19 in which 1,750 people participated.
‘Moner Jotno’ is a mental health hotline number launched by PHWC in collaboration with BRAC and Kan Pete Roi which provides tele-counselling support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Five of PHWC’s counsellors operate this helpline along with others and have consulted 127 clients over the past couple of weeks.

Moner Jotno

Kan Pete Roi is an emotional support helpline which has provided mental health support to around 475 people in collaboration with SAJIDA Foundation over the phone in the past two weeks.

Collaboration with Kan Pete Roi

SAJIDA’s Home and Community Care team has been focusing on high risk members of the population who require special care at home. A total of 65 caregivers are now residing in 37 clients’ houses 24/7 during the lockdown phase. The team has arranged safe and comfortable accommodations and transportation for the full-time working caregivers. Caregivers are also being trained through online sessions and are getting paid 50% more than their usual wages. The uncertainty of how coronavirus is entering our homes is has also put the clients in a state of panic. As per protocol maintaining social distancing is important and clients have expressed their fear in taking services.

Home & Community Care

Like most, HCCL too had to cope with depleting business during the pandemic as people are against having support-staff at home unless absolutely required. Although this has resulted in some temporary service-halts and client-drops, we still continue to support 35+ clients 24x7 who are actively subscribed to our service. However, we hope to overcome the COVID-19 setbacks through a multi-pronged recovery plan - adopting a leaner footprint, reaching out to new customers, focusing on our communications, simplifying our core package offerings, strengthening service delivery, and remote trainings, among others. A reliable, agile, and technology-driven service is what we are trying to build here at HCCL, which will be our edge in the COVID-19 world of tomorrow.
Partnership with ‘Ekadesh’- Bangladesh’s First Digital Crowdfunding Platform

The country’s first digital crowdfunding platform 'EkDesh' by a2i was recently launched to make the process of providing zakat, donations or any other financial grants to any government or non-government organizations easier and safer. SAJIDA Foundation, along with seven other organizations, will now be able to receive any amount of financial donation through the digital platform EkDesh, and be better able to serve the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. SAJIDA is proud to be a part of this timely initiative by a2i which promises to make the vital process of fundraising during the pandemic easier.

Media Highlights

SAJIDA Foundation’s Director of Health, Dr. Tariqul Islam, participated in several live programs of various TV channels and highlighted SAJIDA’s overall COVID-19 response. Several electronic and print media covered the activities of the Isolation Centre and SAJIDA’s other contributions in serving the most vulnerable groups across the country. A blog on interventions undertaken by SAJIDA’s Microfinance program during this challenging time was also published in reputed print and e-news platforms.

Dr. Ashique Selim, Lead Psychiatrist and MD of PHWC was interviewed on live TV on Independent Channel and quoted in an article in the Business Standard news article regarding coping skills on mental health in COVID-19.

New Normalcy Adaptation Protocols for Offices during Post Lockdown Stages

In anticipation of evolving future needs in a changing global climate, SAJIDA has developed a detailed guideline and protocols where frontline roles have been redefined, field operations have been revamped and adequate measures taken to secure workplaces.

This guideline serves as a living document with directives to practice contactless field operations; maintaining adequate physical distancing at the workplace; ensuring strict health and hygiene measures and etiquettes; continuing a combined practice of working from home and office; and implementing a policy of reduced work hours. The guideline will be made accessible to all through SAJIDA’s website.
We are Thankful to Our Covid-19 Response Partners

**Corporate Partners**

- Renata
- HSBC
- IDLC Finance Limited
- MCC
- ABC
- Nestle
- City Group
- ISOL
- Citi
- Axi Group
- Standard Chartered
- Domino's
- IPDC
- Grameen Telecom
- Very Group
- Mallzee

**Platform Partners**

- bKash
- Dmoney
- foodpanda
- daraz
- HungryNaki
- Q
- অ্যাপ

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- WaterAid
- EU
- BRAC
- Penny Appeal
- Concern Worldwide
- Irish Aid
- SNV
- ActionAid

**Crowdfunding Partners**

- Cholo Shobai
- O2i

**Partners for Foreign Donations**

- Adhunika Foundation USA
- Broken Earth

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*Adhunika Foundation USA*
We are Thankful to the Thousands of Donors Who Stepped Up in this Hour of Need

Come Forward and Make a Difference

SAJIDA family is grateful for your thoughtful and generous contribution in these adverse times. Your contribution has made it possible for us to serve vulnerable population across the country. There is, however, more work which needs to be done. We encourage you to visit the following link and see how you can make a Difference:

https://www.sajidafoundation.org/donate-now/