



## File form: 0538-24 - Final report for the Eagle Foundation – December 2020

### Essential medical supplies and equipment in response to the Coronavirus outbreak in Chuadanga and Meherpur, Bangladesh

Date grant accepted: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

Amount of grant: GBP 20,000

*We are so grateful to the Eagle Foundation for your generous and timely support for IMPACT's interventions to prevent and control Covid-19 in Bangladesh. You were the first funder to support this emergency action, enabling IMPACT to act in the very earliest stages of the pandemic to ensure that healthworkers were adequately equipped and that our health facilities were Covid secure and ready to treat critically ill people. Your vote of confidence in our work enabled us to leverage additional funds, which were used to purchase further, much-needed stocks of PPE and disseminate key health messages around hygiene, social-distancing and Covid-19 symptoms.*

*A total of £91,600 was raised in total, benefitting 68,248 people through the provision of healthcare, surgery, health education and food aid. It is our pleasure to report on this action below. Your grant was ring-fenced for PPE, the establishment of isolation wards and food parcels. This expenditure is illustrated in Appendix 1.*

## Background

2020 brought the biggest collective challenge to humanity for decades as Covid-19 reminded us all how precarious our lives are in the face of a novel pathogen. While those of us with access to universal healthcare have sometimes come to expect relatively good health and longevity, Covid-19 gave a glimpse of life for the poorest people in our world who experience daily threats to their health. Health inequalities between - and within - countries were exposed with devastating consequences for real people.

Bangladesh quickly became the second most affected country in South Asia (after India) and IMPACT Bangladesh's (IFB) three hospitals and partner health facilities, found themselves on the frontline of a rapidly unfolding crisis and had to quickly adapt to deal with the challenges presented by the pandemic. As one of the world's most densely populated countries, the concern was that inadequate health infrastructure, scarcity of clean running water and people living in close proximity to each other in conditions of poverty could quickly become a public health crisis of alarming proportions.

**'Bangladesh is a densely populated country. Our resources, access to health facilities and the financial solvency of the majority of our population are very limited. As such, the COVID pandemic in Bangladesh threatened to have a much deeper impact than in wealthier countries.'**

Dr Hasib Mahmood (Director, IMPACT Bangladesh)



**Equipping frontline healthworkers was a priority. Photo shows staff at IMPACT's Chuadanga hospital**

## Timeline: The emergence of the Coronavirus in Bangladesh

- March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 – The World Health Organisation (WHO) declares the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic.
- Early March 2020 – first cases of Covid-19 confirmed in Bangladesh.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – The Bangladeshi Government announces a nationwide lockdown. Infections remained low until the end of March but saw a steep rise in April.
- 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – Cases of Covid-19 were confirmed in all districts of the country. IMPACT's project areas in Chuadanga and Meherpur began to record significant numbers of cases, including 26 healthworkers in the two government hospitals in Chuadanga.
- June 2020 – WHO confirm Bangladesh as the second most affected country in South Asia, after India.
- November 2020 – There have been 443,000 recorded cases in Bangladesh and 6,322 deaths.

The economic impact of the pandemic Bangladesh was felt almost immediately. A survey in April 2020 by the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development found that the average income of Bangladesh's poorest people dropped by more than 80% in the first month of the pandemic. And between February and April the number of households eating three meals a day fell by 24% in rural areas. Thousands of low-skilled migrant workers returned to their villages from urban areas such as Dhaka, and as many as 75,000 overseas workers returned from 23 countries. Major industries, such as the garment-manufacturing sector ground to a halt, and farming was badly affected by the disruption to trade and transportation.

## Report on activities

### Establishing isolation wards at IMPACT hospitals and supporting government health facilities

In March 2020, the Bangladeshi government instructed local district health administrators to organise the establishment of Coronavirus isolation wards at government and NGO hospitals. IMPACT's community hospitals in Chuadanga and Meherpur districts were included in this directive and we are grateful for your timely support, which enabled us to set apart dedicated wards at each facility to be deep cleaned and equipped with new bedding and intensive care equipment. Your grant enabled us to purchase large stocks of hand soap; hand sanitising solution; and cleaning materials in order to enhance our already high hygiene measures across all levels of the hospital. Medicines to relieve the coronavirus symptoms of seriously ill patients were also readied, as well as high dose vitamins, antiviral treatments and oxygen supplies.



Isolation wards at IMPACT's Meherpur and Chuadanga hospitals

The initial government strategy was to hospitalise all patients exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms. In Chuadanga and Meherpur districts, government hospitals were soon full with patients, and becoming critically understaffed as healthworkers also fell ill with the virus. IMPACT’s two community hospitals were used as overspill facilities. 64 patients (including 18 healthworkers) were admitted and cared for by IMPACT until they had fully recovered from the virus. It soon became apparent (the world-over indeed) that health services would quickly be overwhelmed by such a strategy and that most patients could recuperate successfully at home - thus minimising the risk to medics and keeping beds free for the most seriously ill people. The IMPACT isolation wards are now only being used for the treatment of the most complicated cases and thankfully such cases are now declining in our project areas.

In addition to our own health facilities, IMPACT Bangladesh also supported the two main government hospitals in Chuadanga and Meherpur and six district health clinics – providing them with extra supplies of masks, gloves, cleaning supplies and sanitiser. We have a very close working relationship with these government providers and they were grateful for the support, as there were insufficient supplies provided by the government at the start of the pandemic.

**Supporting local journalists to keep the public informed**

In recognition of the difficult task faced by local journalists in covering the crisis, IMPACT distributed masks and supplies of sanitiser to local news outlets. IFB felt it was important to support truth telling in these times of global health crisis, when myths around the disease abound with such dangerous potential.



Supporting local journalists to undertake their work safely

**Protective clothing for healthworkers**

Thanks to your funding, IMPACT Bangladesh was able to take immediate action to ensure that frontline workers and support staff were provided with the protective equipment (PPE) necessary to keep them safe in their role. This ranged from full PPE body suits for healthworkers involved with direct patient contact, to masks and gloves required by workers in less frontline roles.



This PPE has enabled healthworkers to continue providing vital health services throughout the pandemic. And in early June some operations were able to resume, albeit following heightened safety protocols and at lower volume than under normal circumstances. **Despite the challenging circumstances, since April, IMPACT Bangladesh has provided healthcare to 21,220 people and life-changing operations to 1,177 men, women and children.**



Public handwashing stations were installed at IMPACT hospitals. All visitors are temperature screened on entry





Staff at IMPACT's Chuadanga hospital



Staff on board the floating hospital



Staff at IMPACT's Meherpur hospital

## The individual IMPACT

**Suriya (10):** Thanks to your support, IMPACT Bangladesh has been able to continue preventing needless disability for people like Suriya. She was born with childhood cataracts and her sight was deteriorating rapidly. In a country where there are few resources to treat the poorest children with disabilities, her parents were so grateful to IMPACT surgeons for restoring her sight at our Chuadanga hospital. Before lockdown, Suriya's right eye had already been corrected but she still needed surgery for her other eye in order to completely regain vision. We are grateful to you that this was able to take place in September 2020, another surgery was successfully done to correct her left eye said Suriya, smiling. As her bandages were removed, Suriya said, 'I'm so thankful that my eyes are cured. Soon I will be able to go back to school and do much better. Right now I am very, very happy!'



**Nargis Khatun (41):** 'Nargis began to suffer from severe headaches and pain in her eye. As is often the case, disability still carries a great deal of stigma in rural parts of Bangladesh and Nargis' mother in law told her that it was punishment for getting pregnant at a later stage of life. She requested several times for her husband to take her to a doctor but her husband refused, as he was fearful of the Coronavirus situation at the hospital. During the lockdown, Nargis gave birth to a healthy baby boy at home. Nargis told our medical team that it was difficult for her to take care of an infant with her low vision, especially at night, and felt a lot of guilt. In June, a member of the IMPACT Outreach



Team visited her village to distribute emergency food parcels to some of her neighbours. When the IMPACT officer noticed Nargis' visual disability, she informed her of the treatment she would receive free of charge at IMPACT's hospital in Chuadanga town and reassured the family of the safety and hygiene measures the hospital had undertaken. The following day, Nargis went straight to IMPACT's hospital accompanied by her husband. She was examined promptly and her right eye was operated on the next day. When the bandage was removed, she felt afraid to open her eyes; the surgeon encouraged her to open her eyes slowly and try to see. When Nargis opened her eyes, she dramatically cried out and expressed 'I can see! I can also see my baby boy clearly, what else do I need!' Before leaving the hospital, she thanked all the members of IMPACT family.' – As recounted by IMPACT Bangladesh.

### Emergency food aid for vulnerable people

The lockdowns throughout the country prevented people from going out to work and toppled many living precarious hand-to-mouth existences into extreme poverty. The number of vulnerable people in our rural project areas rose, as many migrant workers return jobless from the cities or overseas. As a short-term measure, IMPACT Bangladesh provided emergency food parcels for families facing immediate hunger and long-term malnutrition. Households with a disabled member or sole female head were prioritised. This action also helped to ensure that the poorest people could stay safely at home if they needed to self-isolate.

850 families benefitted from food parcels including rice, potatoes, pulses, onions, salt, sugar, oil, vermicelli and soap (approximately 4,250 people). 250 of these parcels were funded by Fondation Eagle.



Socially distanced food aid distribution





### The Individual IMPACT

Kolpona Akhtar (35): *'This lady is a member of the IMPACT Mother's Club in Jorgacha Poschim. Her husband is a day labourer and earns very little. It is so difficult to manage their big family with six members. Sometimes, they starve for a day and this unfortunate family was already having many episodes of illnesses and hunger when the local market went on lockdown due to Covid-19 and her husband became workless. There became much household tension because they did not have money to buy food and other household necessity. Along with other members of the Mother's Club, Kolpona received some food relief help from IFB. Now, they are learning about home gardening and IMPACT is helping new members like Kolpona with training, seeds, tools, fencing materials and much advice! This is a longer-term solution that will reduce reliance to purchasing vegetables from the market. 'My family don't have to*

*starve because IFB came to us with food relief. Now, for me, my home garden is a life savior. I am lucky to have such life savior.'* Kolpona and her husband expressed their gratitude to IFB' – As recounted by IMPACT Bangladesh.

### Coronavirus health education in the community

Over the course of two decades, IMPACT Bangladesh has developed and nurtured a network of rural Mothers' Clubs in Chuadanga and Mehepur districts. These forum focus on empowering women - since they typically have responsibility for the health and well-being of the whole family - providing them with knowledge on health issues such as maternal and child health, immunisation, healthy nutrition, preventing and/or identifying disabling conditions, accident and injury, safe water and sanitation, and domestic violence. Today there are over 900 Mothers' Clubs with 22,500 regular members.

Throughout the pandemic, IMPACT's fieldworkers have travelled across both districts holding special 'Coronavirus Education Sessions' attended by a total of 23,180 women (16,080 in Chuadanga and 7,100 in Meherpur). As with regular Mothers' Clubs, it has been critical to communicate health messages in such a way as to be accessible to members who are illiterate, or who have only rudimentary schooling by using pictorial resources and language that is easy to understand. The special sessions covered:



- The importance of hygiene measures in preventing the transmission of the virus - such as regular handwashing, social distancing, measures to keep homes clean and ensuring masks are kept clean and correctly worn.
- The signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and the importance of taking rapid action to follow quarantine guidelines.



Relatively early on in the pandemic, the Bangladesh government made face masks mandatory in public areas. We are grateful to you for enabling us to distribute high quality, reusable masks to Mothers' club members, alongside bars of soap to reinforce the importance of handwashing.

**'Our aim is that the Mother's Club members will be changemakers in their respective communities, demonstrating by their own behavioural change how to prevent the spread of the deadly Coronavirus'**

Dr Hasib Mahmood (Director, IMPACT Bangladesh)

In addition, IFB estimate that a further 18,357 members of the public have benefitted from their Coronavirus health messaging at food distribution points and community awareness raising sessions; as well as posters and banners erected in community spaces.

## Thank you

We are so grateful to the Eagle Foundation for your rapid and generous response to our Covid-19 request for funding. You enabled IMPACT Bangladesh to mobilise quickly to support people affected by the virus, or acutely impoverished by lockdowns. Your support also ensured that our doctors, nurses and health workers on the frontline were adequately protected and equipped in order to continue providing vital healthcare services.

Your vote of confidence in this work went on to inspire further donations from other supporters, and enabled IFB to take the other action described in this report.

In common with the rest of the world, Bangladesh continues to face challenges ahead in controlling the spread of the virus but thanks to the steadfast support of people like you, our normal work is carefully re-starting after an extremely challenging six months. We look forward to keeping you abreast with our work.



Dr Kabir (Director of IMPACT's Chuadanga hospital) and his staff have been able to continue providing the most vital healthcare services throughout the pandemic thanks to your support.

## Expenditure report:

The Eagle Foundation, as first funder, contributed 22% of the funding towards the total of IMPACT Bangladesh's emergency action described above.

Activity	Output	Total project expenditure (GBP)	Total Eagle Foundation expenditure (GBP)
Protective equipment provided to frontline healthworkers @ three IMPACT hospitals (including the Jibon Tari floating hospital); two government hospitals; and six local government health clinics.	700 full PPE sets; 700 shoe covers; 700 surgical masks; 700 gloves; 700 head covers; 30 fabric gowns and caps	20,210	-
Disinfectant; hand sanitiser; liquid soap; and cleaning materials supplied to 11 health facilities	1,147 litres of hand sanitiser; 540 bottles hand soap 11 sets flooring cleaning equipment and disinfectant (six month's supply)	4,532	-
Medical equipment supplied to 11 health facilities	Digital thermometers x 25	267	-
Bedding sets provided @ three IMPACT hospitals (including the Jibon Tari floating hospital)	165 bedding sets	857	-
Covid isolation wards established at IMPACT hospitals in Chuadanga and Meherpur	450 full PPE sets; 450 sets gloves/masks; 360 bottles liquid soap; 300 litres hand sanitiser; 6 month supply cleaning materials; mops and cleaning sundries; oxygen supplies; and 180 days of emergency medicines	22,826	14,413 (300 full PPE sets; 300 sets masks/gloves; 180 litres hand sanitiser; 180 bottles liquid soap; 90 of days emergency medicines; mops and cleaning sundries)
Food for patients at three IMPACT hospitals (six month supply) whilst patients are unable to receive visitors who typically bring food for their family members	40 patients per day (90 day supply)	2,850	-
No. of masks (non-medical) supplied to members of the public	25,330	6,031	-
Hygiene packs with soap (x 2) supplied to members of the public	23,180 members of Mothers' Clubs benefitting	14,350	-
Public handwashing stations established	3	1,429	-
Families provided with emergency food parcels	850 families (4,250 people)	17,457	5,604
Members of the public receive Covid-19 health education	23,180 Mothers' Club members 18,357 members of the public	791	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>91,600</b>	<b>20,017</b>

Exchange rate based on 1 GBP = 1.24 USD (01.04.20)



## Appendix 1: Full budget breakdown of Fondation Eagle's contribution

Exchange rate based on 1 GBP = 1.24 USD (01.04.20)

<i>Isolation ward setup and maintenance</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
Personal Protection Equipment	300 sets	6250	6250
Mask & Gloves	300 sets	250	250
Hand Sanitiser	180 bottles	356	356
Liquid Soap	180 sets	150	150
Cleaning Materials for floor cleaning	3 Months	313	313
Mop and other cleaning equipment	3 Months	94	94
Emergency medicine	90 Days	7500	7000
<b><i>Sub Total</i></b>		<b><i>14,913</i></b>	<b><i>14,413</i></b>
<b><i>Supply of Basic Food package for 250 families (approximately 1,250 people)</i></b>			
Cost of rice (1kg per day x 30 days)		4,063	4063
Cost of potato		377	377
Cost of Dal (pulse)		677	677
Cost of oil		300	300
Cost of soap for hand wash		187	187
Sub Total		5,604	5,604
<b><i>Grand total</i></b>			<b><i>£20,017</i></b>

