

Case story

Awareness campaign helps RMG workers' communities fight against COVID-19

Campaign highlights

- ▶ The Behaviour Change Awareness Campaign reached more than 5,000 households in the RMG dense areas of Gazipur and Chattogram, covering a population of more than 20,000 people, at least 60% of whom are women.
- ▶ The campaign continued from June to December 2021 featuring a series of awareness-raising videos, posters, leaflets, door-to-door meetings and public service announcements, engaging a total of 107,180 participants.
- ▶ Findings from the endline study show that the campaign has enhanced the RMG communities' knowledge on multiple aspects related to COVID-19 by more than 20%.
- ▶ A social media intervention as part of the Campaign reached 18,546,146 people on Facebook.

In numbers...



10910

Packets Corona protective materials distributed at household level.



3,500

Corona protective materials distributed to individual informal workers



44,027

Reusable masks distributed



1,750

T-shirts distributed to informal workers bearing COVID-19 messages



77

Hand washing points established at tea stall



71,000

Posters, stickers and leaflets distributed



107,180

Participants reached through campaign events



5,824

People received SMS & Voice Call Messages



18,546,146

People reached through social media boosting



2,050

People registered for COVID-19 vaccination

► Disseminating life-saving information

“During the campaign, we learned that we have to take the danger of Coronavirus seriously. The most important ways to protect against this deadly disease is wearing masks, washing hands and keeping physical distance.”

Parvin Akhter
Housewife
Munshi Bari, Gazipur

Parvin Akhter introduced mask wearing and hand washing practice in her family (comprising four children and her husband) and encouraged her neighbours to do the same to help prevent COVID-19 from spreading in Munshi Bari, a small community mostly populated by garment workers in Gazipur near Bangladesh's capital Dhaka.

What convinced Parvin to take action is the Behaviour Change Awareness Campaign launched by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in her area.

Funded by the Government of Sweden, the campaign is a part of the ILO's Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations (SDIR) project's COVID-

19 response work, jointly with the Department of Labour, Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA),, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Workers Resource Centre (WRC).

► Helping communities help themselves

“I took action by setting up a handwashing area equipped with soap for my tenants. I reduced their monthly rent by BDT 500 (\$6) to help the garment workers cope with the crisis. I wish I could do more, but my family also depends on the rent I earn from the workers.”

Morseda Begum

Landlord

Gazipur

One of the components of the campaign was courtyard meetings, where attendees observe strict physical distancing and other prevention measures. The small gatherings allowed RMG workers and their communities to get the right information on COVID-19 symptoms, preventive measures and dispel misinformation — particularly related to care for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.

Morseda Begum is a landlord in Gazipur's Abed Ali Market area. The majority of her 20 tenants are female garment workers who share a common kitchen and washing area. With support from the community volunteers engaged during the campaign, she hosted several courtyard meetings in her house. The meetings have helped her understand the importance of maintaining good hygiene practices and preventive measures to stay safe from COVID-19.

Community leaders were also engaged to share life-saving information with the rest of their community during the small gatherings. Religious leaders disseminated messages through mosque loudspeakers to reach all residents.

“More than 20 community volunteers supported this campaign in our area. We've also prepared a list of 500 beneficiaries to make sure that the campaign is targeted at those who need it most.”

Md Tamizul Islam

Teacher, Sonaban Memorial High School
Basan, Gazipur

Also included in the campaign was distribution of hygiene kits, social media campaign and SMS and voice messages disseminated through mobile phones. All materials were produced in Bangla to ensure as wide a reach as possible across the target population.

► **Supporting the wellbeing of pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers**

Based on the findings of a pulse survey conducted before the intervention, the campaign has put a special focus to debunk the misconceptions around care for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. (for example, over ⅓ of expectant and new mothers surveyed had the misconception that breastmilk can spread Coronavirus.)

“Thanks to the campaign, I knew exactly how to take care of my newborn baby. I was also able to make my husband quit smoking because we both realized that smoking is a huge risk factor during this pandemic.”

Most Hawa Begum
Operator, Target Denim
& Casual Wear Ltd

“I have learned the essential health tips, preventive measures and hygiene practices from the courtyard meetings. It gave me the confidence and courage to stay safe and take care of my newborn baby during this difficult time.”

Mitu Begum
Housewife
Naojore, Gazipur

► Social media campaign

The Behaviour Change Awareness Campaign also included a Social media campaign targeting the worker's community in Gazipur and Chattogram.

Videos and static posts containing COVID-19 awareness messages were shared on Facebook for two months as part of the Social media campaign.

The campaign reached 18,546,146 people and the messages generated 19,007,315 views in total.

18,546,146

Total
reach

403,218

Total
engagements

19,007,315

Total
views