

# HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE



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## OUR FOCUS AREAS



Strengthening healthcare systems to ensure continued safe deliveries and maternal healthcare services.



Advocating for continued response to gender-based violence and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.



Ensuring outreach with adolescents and youth on infection prevention and risk mitigation measures.



Ensuring response efforts to support the Government of Bangladesh in coordination with UN Agencies and partners.



# CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19



**DISRUPTIONS IN SUPPLY OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH COMMODITIES AND SERVICES**



**LIMITED ACCESS TO HEALTH FACILITIES DUE TO MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS**



**SAFETY OF HEALTH WORKERS & OTHER FRONTLINERS**



**WOMEN AND GIRLS AT INCREASED RISK TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**



**MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUTH AND ADOLESCENTS DUE TO SCHOOL CLOSURES**



**PUBLIC MISCONCEPTIONS AND MISINFORMATION ABOUT THE PANDEMIC**



*Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our staff continues to work tirelessly along with our partners and together with the support from our generous donors, to uphold the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls across Bangladesh, including their safety and autonomy.*

- Dr. Asa Torkelsson, UNFPA Representative, Bangladesh

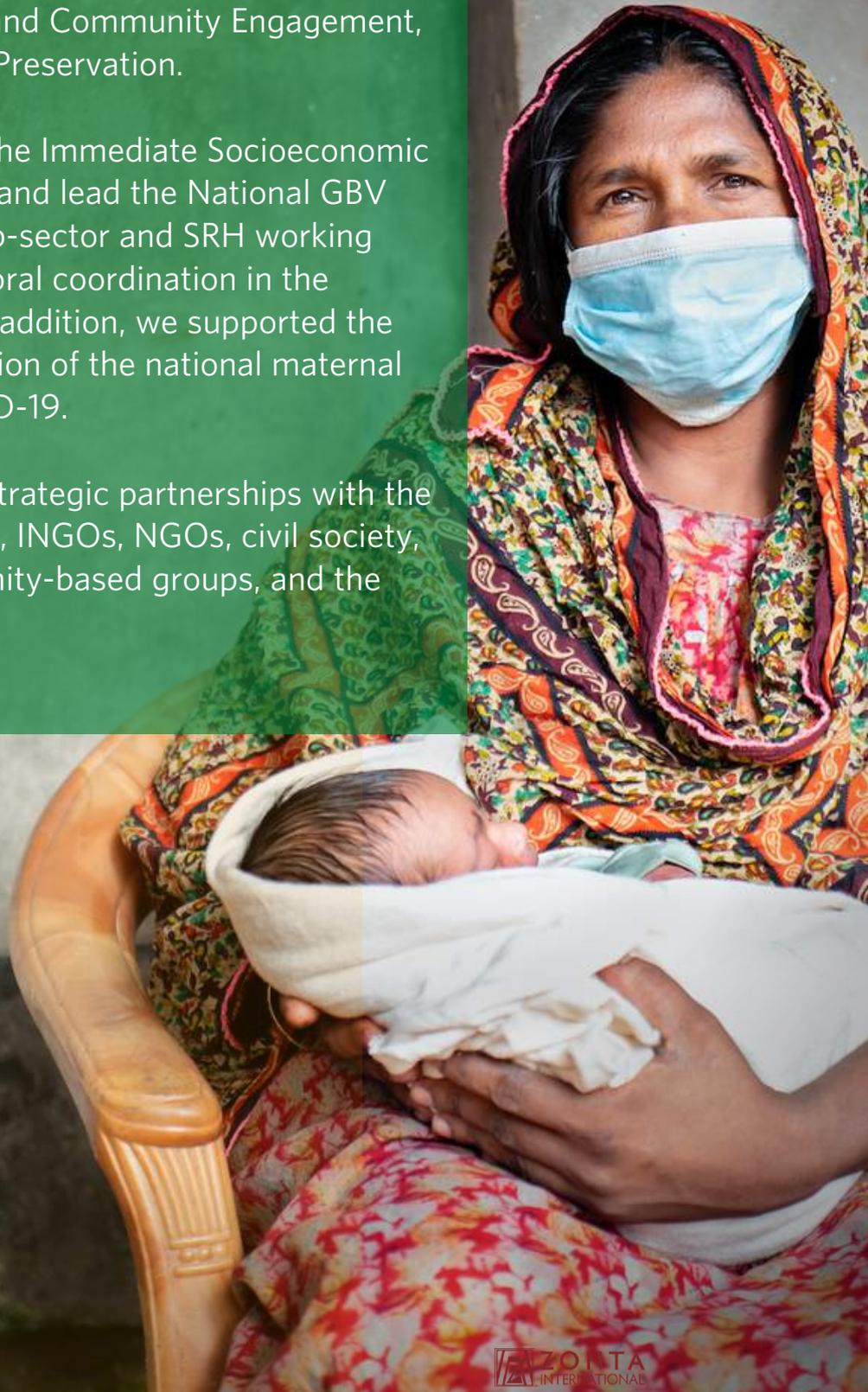
## ENSURING A COORDINATED RESPONSE

UNFPA's response interventions towards COVID-19 in Bangladesh take place under the broader strategic framework set by the National COVID-19 Response Plan of the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Country Team.

In 2020, we supported in implementing the Bangladesh Preparedness and Response Plan (BPRP), particularly through Case Management and Infection Prevention and Control, Risk Communication and Community Engagement, and Social Stability and Peace Preservation.

We also contributed towards the Immediate Socioeconomic Response Framework (iSERF), and lead the National GBV Cluster, as well as the GBV sub-sector and SRH working group as part of the inter-sectoral coordination in the Rohingya refugee response. In addition, we supported the development and implementation of the national maternal health guidelines during COVID-19.

We deliver our work through strategic partnerships with the Government, as well as donors, INGOs, NGOs, civil society, academic institutions, community-based groups, and the media.



# STRENGTHENING ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES

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**We ensured access to safe and quality sexual and reproductive health and rights services by:**



## **DISTRIBUTING MASKS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

**399,093** protective masks were distributed to health facilities to ensure that health professionals can lead safe lives, while saving lives.



## **PROVISION OF CONTINUED SRHR SERVICES**

**354,234** women and girls utilized sexual and reproductive health services despite COVID-19.



## **ESTABLISHING TRIAGE FACILITIES**

**108** triage facilities were established to ensure COVID-19 patients are efficiently screened and isolated



## **FAMILY PLANNING**

**338,447** women received modern methods of contraception through family planning service provision.



## **CERVICAL CANCER SCREENINGS**

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we screened **89,072** women for cervical cancer.

## ENSURING SAFE BIRTH AT ALL TIMES

**We strived to continue preventing maternal deaths and ensure safe deliveries by:**

### **HIRING AND DEPLOYING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

We hired and deployed **1,153** midwives, nurses and other health professionals to ensure that the sexual and reproductive health needs of women and young people continue to be met during the pandemic.



### **ESTABLISHING SEPARATE COVID-19 DELIVERY ROOMS**

To ensure that pregnant women with COVID-19 can safely visit hospitals for delivery, we established **97** separate delivery rooms in health facilities across the country.



### **REFERRING PREGNANT WOMEN FOR SPECIAL CARE**

Even amidst the pandemic, **1,228** pregnant women with health complications were referred for special care, saving lives of both the mother and newborn.



### **PROVIDING TELEMEDICINE SERVICES**

We provided telemedicine services to ensure pregnant women, and women and girls at risk of violence continued to receive live-saving information and advice from medical professionals.



## ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



**We continued to combat gender-based violence and other harmful practices in Bangladesh by:**

### SUPPORTING WOMEN HELP DESKS IN POLICE STATIONS

We ensured that psychosocial services, referral pathways and other crucial assistance remain available to GBV survivors by continuing our support to 31 Women Help Desks across the country. During the pandemic, **12,090** women received support through the Women Help Desks.

### DISTRIBUTING DIGNITY KITS

**62,105** Dignity Kits with products for personal hygiene and protection, included flash cards with information on COVID-19 prevention. These COVID-19 customized dignity kits were distributed to women, girls and transgender people across Bangladesh, including in the slum areas.

### CONDUCTING AWARENESS-RAISING SESSIONS

**680,186** women participated in awareness-raising sessions on gender-based violence. The sessions continue to be held around the country, including in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, following COVID-19 safety precautions.

## EMPOWERING YOUTH

**We established new ways of providing young people information and support related to sexual and reproductive health and rights by:**

### RE-LAUNCHING THE ALAPON HELPLINE

To ensure that young people could discuss their concerns about the pandemic with professional counselors, UNFPA re-launched the 'Alapon' helpline, reaching **17,196** young people.

### #YOUTHAGAINSTCOVID19 CAMPAIGN

Through a UNFPA & Prezi global partnership, we encouraged local youth to make informational videos on COVID-19. A total of 36 videos were made in Bangla, reaching **34,054** people.

### PROVIDING ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY SRHR SERVICES

We continued to provide our adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights services, which were accessed by **13,259** young people across the country.





## COVID-19 RESPONSE IN HUMANITARIAN SETTING

### AMBULANCE SERVICES

We supported the establishment and equipping of four new Emergency Referral Hubs and ambulance services in hard-to-reach points of the Rohingya camps to help address delays in reaching health services for emergency obstetric and new-born care and other sexual and reproductive health care.

### WOMEN FRIENDLY SPACES

All 23 of UNFPA's Women Friendly Spaces continued to operate and provide comprehensive GBV case management services, psychosocial support and emergency referrals. Moreover, in 19 of the Women Friendly Spaces, midwives provided integrated SRHR services and clinical management of rape for survivors.

### PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT KITS

2,010 psychosocial support kits were distributed to participants in UNFPA's adolescent clubs in Cox's Bazar to help them cope with the stress and anxiety caused by COVID-19. The kits contained a radio, a memory card with recorded radio shows, a solar battery, art materials and flash cards with lifesaving information on mental health, SRHR and GBV.

### WOMEN-LED COMMUNITY CENTERS

10 of UNFPA's Women-Led Community centers continued to operate in the Rohingya camps, training local women to sew masks to halt the spread of COVID-19 in Cox's Bazar. In three months, a total of 166,512 masks were produced.

### CYCLONE AMPHAN

In the aftermath of Cyclone Amphan, UNFPA and our partners immediately provided relief and life-saving information to over 250,000 people in the affected districts by distributing dignity, menstrual hygiene management and reproductive health kits. All kits were designed to take into account the needs that have emerged as a result of COVID-19.

### ANTICIPATORY ACTION

After flooding was predicted in Gaibandha, Jamalpur and Kurigram Districts, UNFPA and our implementing partners used funding from UN CERF to distribute life-saving supplies to women, girls and transgender people in the vulnerable communities before the floods hit. This was the first time that relief was provided before the disaster.





Over **1 million** people received COVID-19 related information through the UNFPA Bangladesh social media channels.

Additionally, information was disseminated at community-level through TV, radio, and posters.

## COVID-19 INNOVATIONS

### ROVING MIDWIVES

UNFPA deployed 60 midwives outside their home communities to perform safe deliveries in over 30 rural and urban health facilities, where access to maternal healthcare is limited.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT TEAMS

UNFPA played an integral role in setting up the joint-UN "Community Support Teams" initiative, which provides door-to-door screening and quarantining of probable COVID-19 cases in communities across Bangladesh.

### GBV SOLUTIONS VIRTUAL LAB

In August 2020, UNFPA organized a 4-day virtual workshop with over 80 local and international experts to create innovative and integrated solutions to gender-based violence in Bangladesh during COVID-19.

### 'ALAPON' FACEBOOK LIVE SESSIONS

In addition to activating the 'Alapon' helpline, UNFPA together with a2i, regularly organized Facebook Live sessions with the 'Alapon' counselors, during which young people engaged in virtual conversations from their homes.

### MASK MAKING BY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

We empowered vulnerable populations, such as fistula survivors and sex workers, by training them to sew and sell cloth masks. This enabled them to contribute to their communities' combat against COVID-19.

### MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

We helped all public midwifery schools pivot to remote education by utilizing a flipped classroom model and social media. As a result of these measure, over 80% of midwifery students were able to continue their education.

# “ LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND ”



## “

*"For the first time in my life, I felt that I was treated like a normal human being."*

-Kalji, a recipient of UNFPA's dignity kit specifically designed to meet the needs of Bangladesh's transgender community during COVID-19



*"After my fistula surgery, I received sewing training and I am now making and selling my own cloth masks. I am so happy to be able to contribute to my family again."*

-Marina, 47, a fistula survivor and a beneficiary of UNFPA's programme



*"As a humanitarian worker, we must always think about the happiness and peace of others, beyond our own family."*

-Anjuman Hossain, a humanitarian worker at a Women Friendly Space in Cox's Bazar



*"I feel like a brave warrior, who has not shielded away from her responsibilities!"*

-Sarmin, a "Roving Midwife" serving in Dinajpur District



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# ACKNOWLEDGING OUR DONORS



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