COVID-19 RESPONSE
(Up to August 31, 2020)

Hon’ble State Minister Mr. Zunaid Ahmed Palak
and other speakers on TV Talk Show

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is much more than a health crisis. It has an unprecedented impact on socio-economic arena. Anxiety and fear has touches every one of the countries around the globe. The situation in Bangladesh is till worrying, and it is comparable with many other countries which have lately seen a devastating impact from the virus. We needs coordinated compact response, strong leadership and solidarity to overcome the coronavirus crisis.

Light House from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has taken measures to save both community people and staffs from the virus. Ensured hand wash point at office and community, ensure hygiene kits, mask, gloves, gowns, goggles and other PPEs. Light House continued to provide health services at the field level, enhance mental health counseling, distributes cash support to most affected marginalized groups. However considering prolong Covid-19 infection spared to the rural district, Light House taken special drive massive awareness on mask wearing, physical distancing and hand washing through virtual means and mass and social media in last August 2020 as follow:

Campaign with Maasranga TV

Under the activities of PAR/Counterpart, COVID-19 response grant from USAID/UKAID, for addressing the specific issues such food supplies, Cash transfer, NID issues, stigma related to migrants, excluded group of peoples and covid-19 infected and affected people including health provider, Light House arranged three episode of TV talk show with the Maasranga Television where different policy makers, law makers and influential representatives were participated such as Mr. Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Minister of state for Information and Communications Technology Bangladesh, Member of Parliament, Rajshahi-2 and Natore-1, EX Pro-VC, Rajshahi University, Professor Geology & Mining Department, Rajshahi University, Mayor, Natore Pourosova, Upazilla Chairman of Natore & Bogura, Public Health Specialist, RMO, Bogura, Mohammad Ali Hospital, and Chief Executive of Light House. The discussion was focused the present situation of the marginal people during this COVID-19 and how to save them from the coronavirus; stimulus package including cash allowance to address the COVID-19 and role of the local government institute etc. Around 40,000 Facebook user already viewed the shows and unlimited number people of the television viewers watch this live telecast events.

Campaign with YouTube

Light House established its YouTube Channel for publishing the project events, TV dialogue, HR violation report, Radio show and other awareness messages etc. for raising much awareness and to get update about the Light House activities. The link is given bellow:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1fliSZZ84lSueDaH5vja7Q
Advocacy with local administration

In order to make equal and proper distribution of GoB declared relief and different incentive programs; and to prevent stigma, discrimination associated with COVID 19 infection, Light House, hosted the meeting on “Covid-19 Response towards Marginal People at Natore, Rajshahi and Kahalu under Bogura District” in association with Counterpart International with financial support from USAID and UK aid. A total of 95 participants participated actively where Male 80 and Female 15 during this reporting period of August 20. Hon'ble Member of Parliament Women's Reserved Seat, Natore, and Rajshahi-2, Deputy Commissioner, Mayor and UNO, President of SWACHIP, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Women Affairs, Regional Election Officer, media, Civil Society Organization, Local Government Institute, representatives, USAID and CPI representatives participated. This online advocacy resulted to reduce the corona test fee common people as well. Election Officer committed during meeting sole the NID issue for Transgender and District women officer committed to offer a special training for Female sex workers.

Press briefing with print and electronic media

To reach wider people for create awareness on Covid-19, Light House organize meeting with media representative of print and electronic media, during August 2020 a meeting held with the 35 media representative of Rajshahi district. As a result a huge coverage made through different medias and it can be viewed via following link: https://www.bssnews.net/?p=444710

More initiative for awareness campaign will place in Radio, On Line TV, TVC for mainstream TV, Facebook and with print media September and October 2020.
Food Support Distribution:

During the pandemic the most affected marginalized groups including sex workers, Hijra, poor communities have faced sudden shortage of daily food. To minimize the needs, Light House has taken initiatives to distribute food support to them as immediate responses. With these food support it has fulfill demand of livelihood support alongside of health services and other services. Foods were distributed to 600 community people of Bogura town and Kazipara of Kahaloo Upazila with contribution Light House staffs. In association with “German Doctors” and icddr,b, Light House distributed the food support among 1303 Hijra and MSWs of its 18 working districts. Light House ensured food support to 111 female sex workers of Dhaka by its own fund. And under the project supported by UNFPA, it has provided food support 394 brothel based female sex workers and their children (Children: 90 and FSW: 304). The food support includes rice, pulse, (dal), potato, Onion, salt, and cooking oil and for children suji; milk, biscuits, etc.

SRH and HTS done: (STI, RTI etc)

As per direction and guidance from National AIDS and STD program, Light House service centers from FSWs, MSWs and Hijra were open in 29 districts by maintaining social distance and hygiene practice. At the same time, it has provided services urban poor people in Rangpur City Corporation through its clinics. Till August 13,065 FSWs were given treatment for various diseases (STI, General Ailment, MCH, MR etc),8,850 FSWs were tested for HIV, 3,945 Hijra and MSM were tested for HIV and 2,084 STI and 2,133 General health case treated with free medicine.

Health Service provided

Light House has been working in 29 districts to provide health services to poor and marginalized communities including sex worker, MSM, Hijra, urban poor, adolescents, children and Rohingya. Most of the doctor of Light House has completed online training on COVID-19 and operate health services in their service centers. 12,757 Families of Light House 29 working districts gets maternal and child health services, STI, Cervical cancer, pregnancy etc. Besides Light House provides need based health services to 3,945 Hijra and MSM, 10,931 FSW in 29 project districts by its project Health Care Providers.

Counseling service provided: (Including mental health)

COVID-19 has created uncertainty, lockdown measure lead many to isolate from the love one, social distance and restriction pose lonely and impact create panic and fear among the community and beneficiaries. During the period, Light House’s trained counselors were active to listen their voices and provide them distance counseling and mental health and psycho-social supports among female sex workers, MSWs and Hijras. Light House team counseled 3,945 Hijra and MSWs, 10,931 FSWs and 12,757 persons under different project. Light House trained MHPSS counselor were given mental health and psychosocial support to 941 beneficiaries.
Relief ensured though networking and Communication

To save people from the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 government mobilized significant resources to support communities impacted. Stimulus packages including cash transfer to poor and vulnerable are among them. However, it is likely that there may be possibility that most marginalize and vulnerable group will not be listed in the priority list due to their fear of disclosure of profession to others. Light House Offices and service centers located in 29 districts took measures to listed down those to share with government authorities and NGO for ensure relief to most needed. Light House GF-MSM and Hijra project ensured food relief and cash incentive for 2,450 Hijra and MSM, 5,141 sex workers from DC/UNO/LEB/DSS offices and NGO. Besides, total of BDT 68,51,000 has been distributed among 6132 families of Rajshahi by the Community Action Group (CAG) under govt cash transfer initiatives. 80,716 kg rice has been distributed among 26,286 peoples at Rajshahi under the networking of DARAU project.

Cash distribution:

The COVID-19 pandemic had led governments of several countries impose lockdowns to prevent the spread of the virus. The lockdowns have restricted the mobility of the population. It also effectively closed down brothels, causing many sex workers to lose their clients and daily income. Considering the fact, Light House in association with UNFPA took initiative of distributing cash support through mobile banking to the selected FSWs of five brothels at Banishanta (Khulna), Daulatdia (Rajbari), Patuakhali and C&B Ghat and Rothkhola (Faridpur) on June 2020. A total of 479 FSWs received taka 1227/- each through mobile banking among brothels sex workers. Total 5,87,733 Taka has been distributed through bKash.

Besides, UN Women has been distributed cash through mobile banking to the Brothel based FSW of Jamalpur in July 2020. Among 212, a total of 133 FSW received taka 3055/- each including mobile banking charge. A total of 4,06,315 taka has distributed to sex workers. On other hand, Light House has already awarded BDT-37,50,000 to transfer among the project beneficiaries of MJF funded “Responsible” project under “Excluded People’s Rights” programs. UN Women has provide BDT-14,977,549 ($1,76,414) for create awareness on COVID-19 and prevention and response on GBV.

Awareness & Miking campaigns for awareness rising on COVID-19

Light House has been working to create awareness on COVID-19 among the project beneficiaries and communities through one to one and group education sessions, mikings, courtyard meeting, using social media, IEC and TV. Staffs are taken initiatives distributes leaflet among the staffs, beneficiaries as well as among the community around. Besides, it has taken initiative of miking on the COVID-19 messages and how to maintain social distancing. Till August 2020, it has distributes 81,624 pcs leaflets among the community people and beneficiaries. Peer Educators and health workers have disseminated awareness message regarding safety caution of COVID-19 among 67,348 beneficiaries by maintaining proper social distance and other protective measures. On other hand more than 25,047 people were reached through 10 Facebook live program on Corona, Mental Health and Pregnancy and 8 online advocacies on corona and drugs.

On other hand, till date 279,500 people were reached through Miking campaigns for awareness rising on COVID-19 at Bogura, Tangail districts. This miking campaigning has done during Kurbani Hat (Eid-Ul-Azha) and Bazar areas and the communities of remote areas. Besides, Urban Primary Health Care Service Delivery Project: UPHCSDP-II conducting miking regularly to create awareness on COVID-19 in all 33 wards of Rangpur City Corporation. It has done 10 days continued miking and reached 140,000 (estimated) people of Rangpur city.
Doctors Helpline
During the COVID-19 pandemic, many services were not possible to provide physically and also services were stopped due to fear. Considering the prevailing situation and address the needs of the community, Light House has developed help line pool with its doctors and medical assistants. For wider coverage and helping community, Light House made public of this medical team help line. This helpline pool is now available on face book. Doctors are regularly coming to face book live to answer questions of project beneficiaries and general public. After introducing helpline so far 1,254 calls were received and addressed their issues of COVID-19 by our doctors.

PPE including Hygiene kits-purchased and distributed
PPE are important because they prevent us from being exposed to the virus on surfaces and safety risks at work. So, save from COVID-19, Light House ensured PPE for the field staffs. The PPEs includes hand gloves, masks, apron, goggles, disposable head cap, disposable gown, hand sanitizer, hand rub, tissue role, liquid soap. Beside had washing facilities ensured at the entrance of all 68 drop-in-center/health facilities. So far Light House has distrusted 74,445 pcs of PPE and Hygiene kits including Surgical mask, cloth mask, filter mask, disposable gloves, Hexisol, Sodium hypochlorite solution, Kitchen towel, Liquid Soap, Mackintosh, Goggles, OT Cap, Utility gloves, Gumboot Shoe, Disposable Shoe cover, Detergent Powder and Infrared thermometers.

Bio-Safety and Protection: (PPE including Hygiene kits-purchased and distributed)
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Light House working areas
Light House has been working and implementing different projects in Dhaka city, Dhaka district, Bogura, Naogaon, Joypurhat, Pabna, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Sirajganj, Natore, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Barishal, Patuakhali, Khulna, Bagherhat, Jashore, Satkhira, Magura, Kushthia, Dhaka, Tangail, Faridpur, Rajbari, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Sherpur, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Cox’s Bazar, Chattogram, Sylhet, Rangamati, Moulibazar, Sunamganj, Banderban, Noakhali, Khagrachari, Hobiganj, Netrokona, Munshiganj, Jhalokathi, Pirojpur, Bholā, Kishoreganj, and Gaibandha districts of 8 divisions of Bangladesh.
Light House acknowledges contribution of donors for COVID-19 pandemic response: