

Online launching event

# COVID-19 Learning, Evidence and Research Programme for Bangladesh (CLEAR)

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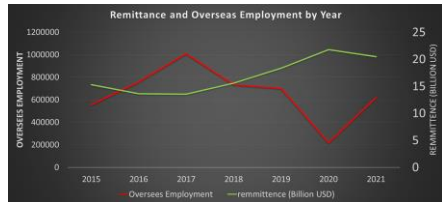
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# CLEAR Scoping Papers

- Research programme to support Bangladesh's Covid-19 response and recovery
- Five key areas identified for scoping based on criticality for recovery and new social science research needs to support policy and programmes
  - International labour migration
  - Learning loss and decay
  - Labour rights
  - Social protection
  - Violence against women
- Draft scoping reviewed by experts and consulted with stakeholders for finalization
- Final scoping papers will feed into RFPs for Competitive Grants

# International Migration



## Context

- Bangladesh is the **8th largest remittance-receiving country**
- Around **13 million Bangladeshi workers** left the country in search of work abroad from **1976 till 2020** (BMET, 2020)
- **408,408 migrants returned** to Bangladesh during **April-December 2020**

## Focus of scoping paper

- **Focus on returnee migrants, aspiring outbound migrants, migrants stranded abroad & female migrants**
- Need to look into the economic, social and psycho-social impact of Covid on these groups
- Policies needed to ensure **sustainable reintegration** and **safe remigration** for failed migrants

## Takeaways from workshop

- **No established sustainable reintegration** process for Bangladeshi migrants
- **Lack of social protection** in both home & host countries increased migrants' vulnerabilities during the crisis
- Substantial amount of **unpaid wage** of returnee migrants due to COVID-19 but **no grievance mechanism** to address this wage theft as labor wings abroad are insufficient
- **Diversification** on migrants' income at home through encouragement of savings and investment behavior can be one way of reducing their vulnerabilities.

# Learning Emergency

## Context

- Direct effects - **learning loss** due to disengagement from studies, **halting of school feeding programs**
- Indirect effects - malnutrition, child marriage and early entry into the labour force
- Most at risk of learning loss - children from **extreme poor HH**, children at **remote disadvantaged areas, girls** in the intersection of such areas, and **secondary school boys**

## Focus of scoping paper

- Identify the most **disadvantaged learners among marginalized groups**
- Possible **supply-side effects** and consequent implications on the primary and secondary education sector
- Impact on the progress of previously implemented **government programs** to increase school access

## Takeaways from workshop

- Acknowledgement that learning crisis into an **emergency** in the aftermath of Covid
- Conventional teaching practices and curricula to be re-adjusted to tackle Covid induced learning challenges
- More focus needs to be placed on the **urban poor** and children with **special needs**
- Teachers need to be trained to face the challenge of teaching children with learning gaps and at the right level - **Teacher learning** loss due to inactive teaching practices need addressing as well

# The state of labour rights during COVID-19

## Context

- Labour rights condition in most sectors before the pandemic worsened due to covid
- Workers of neither formal nor informal sectors have seen their demands being met through any collective effort
- Certain occupations sectors were hit harder than others—**transport** and **RMG** in the formal sectors, **street vendors** from the informal sector, and **beauty parlors** from SMEs.

## Focus of scoping paper

- Dearth of evidence on labour rights for the sectors covered, except RMG
  - Transport workers: need for a comprehensive database and social protection. Also need to explore the nature of trade union-related rights and the collective bargaining power of workers
  - Beauty parlors: no database, no union, need for formal training processes with certification
  - Street vendors: sector mapping required. We need to understand impact of Covid on this sector

## Takeaways from workshop

- Targeting GSP Plus for the RMG sector; research needed in labour rights, sustainability, workers coping with Covid-19 for RMG workers
- Need to understand the precarity of the beauty parlor workers, rights violations (sexual harassment, layoff without notice, salary cuts etc.), collective action etc.
- Need policy interventions to create legal framework and polices for street vending sector
- Very little knowledge on the emerging platform economy sector workers' rights

# Social Protection during COVID Times: Research for Building Forward Better

## Context

- Economic hardship due to COVID-19 has led to an **increase in the number of people falling into poverty**: the poor became poorer while many Vulnerable Non Poor (VNP) became poor
- The government **expanded social protection** system (SP) by raising the budgetary allocations by 12.5% in FY 2021–22
- Social protection system faced a number of critical limitations in terms of governance, distribution and access—need to make the system more **responsive** and **reliable** for those who need the most at the right time
- Who are left out from existing schemes – unemployed youth, informal urban floating workers. OMS does not help those below the poverty line

## Focus of scoping paper

- Designing innovative targeting mechanisms in social protection - what are the steps that should be taken to achieve targeting efficiency?
- Devising appropriate mechanisms for identifying the vulnerable non-poor
- Examining factors contributing to the modernization of social protection in terms of verification, targeting & payment
- Social protection in the context of urban Bangladesh

# COVID-19 consequences on Violence against Women

## Context

- All types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence has intensified
- **Disruption** in providing both legal and welfare services to DV survivor, as number of cases filed is low and redress is slow due to the pandemic.
- DV survivors have to **navigate a complex system** that is not efficiently adjusted to their needs during the pandemic

## Focus of scoping paper

- Factors that may increase vulnerability - loss of income, school closures, returning migrant workers, communities remaining under lockdown for prolonged periods, were more likely to face more severe impacts during the ongoing situation,
- Marginalized groups - persons with disability, LGBTIQ+ and ethnic minorities would face greater violence due to their increased vulnerability during the Covid period. However no comprehensive and substantial research has been done on the violence inflicted on these groups
- Need for better data and measurements of DV, need to monitor trends over time for better policies and interventions and course correcting them
- Emerging areas of vulnerability and concern - cyber harassment, new dynamics of early marriage, longer term impact of GBV.

# Thank you

