



Photo: BINDU workers disseminating messages of hygiene practices and preventive measures against COVID-19. (credit: BINDU Women Development)


**CASE STUDY 2**

**YOUNG WOMEN RAISE-  
AWARENESS AND GENERATE  
INCOME IN COMBATING COVID-19**




*“AS YOUNG WOMEN WE DON’T HAVE LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ACT BECAUSE OF THE PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY ... SO WHEN YOUNG WOMEN DO SOMETHING FOR THEIR SOCIETY AND WE PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN PROTECTING THE PEOPLE FROM COVID, THIS IS A GOOD FOR WOMEN. IT’S GOOD TO SHOW OUR PARTICIPATION AS WOMEN AND DO SOMETHING FOR SOCIETY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THE YOUNG PEOPLE ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG WOMEN SO THAT OTHER WOMEN CAN GET INSPIRED TO ALSO ACT.”*


Jannatul Mouwa, Youth Leader, BINDU Women Development / BINDU Nari Unnayan Sangathan.

 The aim of this project was to respond to COVID-19 by adapting the services of BINDU Women Development to the COVID-19 response. The youth organization, which focused on reducing gender-based violence, child marriage, and supporting women's livelihoods, extended its focus to include COVID-19 prevention activities such as training local young women on making facemasks.

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 The participants were young volunteer women belonging to the BINDU Women Development organization. Over 100 young women were actively working on the COVID response.

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 The project implemented a multi-faceted strategy including the production of facemasks, the establishment of handwashing points, awareness-raising, training and the provision of monetary relief.

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 This initiative was supported by UN Women and led by BINDU Women Development / BINDU Nari Unnayan Sangathan, a youth feminist organization working in the South-West coastal region of Bangladesh.

## THE COVID-19 CONTEXT

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The COVID-19 crisis impacted Bangladesh severely. Many 'Climate Migrants' began returning to their villages from big cities after losing their jobs, and many women-headed families were in economic crisis. The crisis exacerbated social problems

such as gender-based violence (GBV) and child violence, child marriage and crime. In addition, there was a problem with the availability of COVID-19 protection kits, and coastal districts suffered from the impacts of cyclone AmPhan.

## THE INTERVENTION

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The young women from BINDU were active in delivering practical responses to the pandemic. They produced facemasks and hand sanitizers, based on instructions from WHO, distributed these freely in their community, and sold them to other Civil Society Organizations. BINDU members also installed four hand washing points in public areas.

Recognizing the power of community radio, BINDU broadcasted six radio programmes to build awareness about COVID-19.

BINDU activated their young women-led emergency response teams as early in the pandemic to distribute leaflets and posters and hold awareness-raising courtyard meetings.

At those meetings, they encouraged dialogue and explained how to properly wear a facemask, how to wash hands, and how to maintain social distancing, while following the guidelines from WHO and the Bangladeshi Ministry of

Health. They also provided support on dealing with gender-based violence and access legal support during public health emergency situations.

As the pandemic progressed, they continued with multiple campaigns to raise awareness and distributed leaflets and posters with lists of symptoms, causes and prevention methods for the virus.

Awareness-raising was complemented by relief activity, providing direct food assistance to poor female-headed families, and providing COVID-19 prevention supplies in the wake of the cyclone. The young women created a 'wall for humanity' space in the community, where food and other essential items could be left for people in need. These were previously middle-income families who had fallen into financial hardships due to the pandemic and who did not have access to relief support. All staff members of BINDU also contributed one month's salary to an emergency fund.



Photo: BINDU organized distribution of hygiene kits to women hit hard by COVID lockdown and mobility restriction resulting in loss of livelihoods. (credit: BINDU Women Development)

## OUTCOMES & RESULTS

The production of facemasks and hand sanitizers created job opportunities for young women producing the items and

generated additional income to support their COVID-19 response initiatives.

## MEETING CHALLENGES

Many of the participating young women faced societal challenges about being seen to be active outside of the home and going to the field to talk to communities about COVID. However, by belonging to BINDU they supported each

other to stay strong in their commitment to help. *"We had a big promise with ourselves that we needed to do this, so we ignored those people who tried to stop us,"* remembers youth leader Jannatul Mouwa.

## KEY LESSONS

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A key takeaway has been the importance of partnering with local governments and community-based organizations. Community members and local NGOs also came forward to contribute to the joint effort. As a result, this initiative fostered a valuable partnership between

government and community leaders. BINDU pursued partnerships to reinforce activities, including joining the government's 'Corona Expert Team' and hosted a Master Trainer workshop in cooperation with the local administration and health department.

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For further information about this case study, you can contact the following individuals:

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You can also find out more by visiting the organization's websites:

- [BINDU Women Development](#)
- [UN WOMEN Bangladesh](#)

### Collective Service - For a Community-Led Response

The Collective Service, a strategic partnership between UNICEF, IFRC, and WHO, with the support of GOARN enables collaboration between a wide range of organizations to increase the scale and quality of community engagement approaches in public health emergencies and other crises. Find out more: <https://www.rcce-collective.net>

**This document forms part of a collection of 7 case studies, and has been selected by the Youth Engagement Subgroup YES! of the Collective Service (UNICEF, WHO, IFRC, GOARN) as an initiative of UNICEF, UNAIDS, and the Collective Helpdesk with the support of UN WOMEN and the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, as part of an open call for good practices to document, analyze, and promote youth engagement and youth leadership across countries and regions.**