

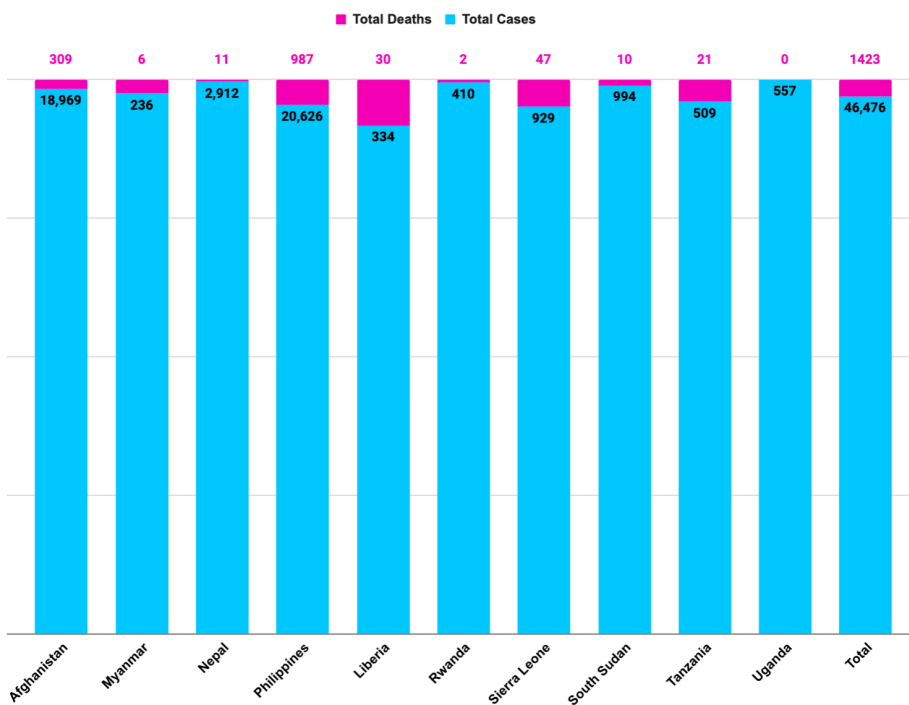
BRAC International Operates In: Uganda, Tanzania, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Philippines, Myanmar, Nepal

TREND IN COVID-19 SITUATION IN THE BRAC INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES OF OPERATIONS

The total COVID-19 cases reported in BRAC International countries of operation as of today is 46,476 and the total confirmed deaths is 1,423. The number of new cases reported this week is 13,426 with 153 deaths. Rwanda has recorded deaths for the first time this week, and Uganda is the only BRAC International country of operation with no confirmed deaths so far.

The number of reported cases in the four BRAC International countries of operations in the Asia region is 11 times more

Fig 1: Total cases and deaths in BRAC International countries



(Source: Johns Hopkins University and Medicine, Coronavirus Resource Center, Last updated at 6/5/2020, 11:33 AM)

than the six countries of operations in the Africa region (the comparison of death cases is even worse, which is 12 times more).

The Philippines continues to remain the country reporting the highest numbers of cases and deaths among all the BRAC



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“COVID-19 is adversely affecting the poor. A BRAC trained jewelry maker with an income of \$30 per week is now selling vegetables on the street, barely earning around \$3 per week. Therefore, constant connectedness with the community while designing response strategies for the “new normal” will be BRAC Nepal’s priority. We are in this together, we will get through this together.”

– Khemraj Upadhyaya
Country Representative
BRAC Nepal

International countries of operations. Amongst the BRAC International countries of operations in the Africa region, South Sudan has shown no changes since last week, yet it remains the country with the highest number of cases, Sierra Leone reported the highest numbers of deaths, and Tanzania has reported no changes since May 8, 2020.

OUR REACH



42 million

people reached and sensitised on COVID-19



906,452

life-saving information materials distributed



228,143

face masks handed over to people in vulnerable situations



93,036

bars of soaps distributed in multiple communities

BRAC INTERNATIONAL REOPENS 3 COUNTRY OFFICES

As lockdowns around the world are starting to be eased, we begin to open our BRAC International countries of operations. We have developed a detailed plan for the reopening. Each country's plan will be based on local conditions and government directives. Our overwhelming priority is the health, safety and security of our staff, clients and participants and we are taking a number of measures to ensure we achieve this. Staff in all offices that are reopening have been provided with masks and hand sanitisers.

Here is some more specific information about the actions taken in our three country offices that have already re-opened:

MYANMAR

As the lockdown measures are gradually eased in Myanmar, the BRAC team is implementing a number of crucial steps. Prior to reopening, an official from the Township Department of Health conducted a physical inspection of the office to assess whether all forms of safety protocols were in place for the staff to resume their work. Upon successfully clearing the inspection, BRAC Myanmar received a clearance certificate. Despite offices reopening, staff who are pregnant, elderly, parents of young children, or have chronic health conditions are encouraged to work from home. A maximum number of five staff are allowed in each branch office in compliance with government regulations.

RWANDA

BRAC Rwanda is embracing the new normal by prioritising the safety and security of the staff and clients, ensuring travel security of the frontline responders, and providing protective personal

equipment. The country office has set strict rules during its resumption phase, such as allowing only six essential staff to enter the office and permitting only five clients per day. In addition, during loan disbursement, money will be passed to clients in envelopes.

TANZANIA

The BRAC Tanzania office has installed hand washing points at all branches. An [awareness video](#) has been created to guide stakeholders on the safety and security measures. In addition, they have re-organised office sitting arrangements to maintain social distancing. Trained personnel have been put in place to provide psychosocial support for staff. Detailed SMS have been sent out to clients and participants. In areas with a high numbers of infections, such as Dar es Salaam, thermo guns have been put in place to check the temperature of all visitors and staff before they enter.

ASSISTANT MINISTER VISITS COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED BY BRAC LIBERIA

The BRAC Liberia Country Director, Programme Manager and Assistant Minister for Early Childhood Education, Hon. Thelma T. Manston–Nimmo, conducted a four days (May 28–31, 2020) field monitoring and supervision visits to 5 Second Chance community schools in Lofa County. The Second Chance programme helps provide those who have dropped out of school with another chance at mainstream education.

During the field visit, the Country Director and Assistant Minister talked to parents, children, and teachers. The discussions were centred on COVID–19 prevention awareness, children home–based learning activities and livelihoods during the state of emergency and lockdowns. Both the Country Director and Assistant Minister encouraged parents, children and teachers to wash their hands regularly, wear face masks, and ensure social distancing to keep themselves and their families safe.



The parents thanked BRAC and the Ministry of Education (MoE) for the continued support. According to the parents, the BRAC Liberia facilitators and Area Coordinators are always following up with them through household visits and phone calls, and text messages. However, the parents noted a reduction in sale of their produce due to travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

The teachers expressed gratitude to BRAC Liberia for continuing to pay their salaries and for the donation of literacy workbooks to keep the children engaged at home. Some of the children reported that since the start of the pandemic their parents have been bringing them along to the farms and thus were not doing sufficient home–based learning. The Assistant Minister and BRAC Liberia Country Director encouraged parents to make sure their children have the time to practice and study their lessons as developed in the workbooks to keep them engaged.

FEAR AND ANXIETY IN HERAT

Satara Abdul Zaher is a 10th grade student at the Baghkarbasi Community Based Girls' School in a small village in Enjil district of Herat province, Afghanistan. She lives in a region where most people cannot read, and as a result there is a lack of awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic. This became a huge challenge as most people, including Satara, lived in constant fear and anxiety. People in Herat were left hopeless as they were asked to stay at home without being given any hint of a solution.

“During such difficult times, BRAC Afghanistan stood by us. They conducted awareness sessions and briefed us about preventive measures against the virus and our responsibilities towards our family and the community”, said Satara. “Now we are not afraid anymore. We have accustomed ourselves with the fact that we have to live with the virus for a long time. We have to be careful and cooperative with each other,” she added.

Satara, as a school goer, felt a responsibility to share her knowledge with her community. When authorities distributed soaps in her village, people didn't know the proper steps for washing their hands. She taught them and encouraged everyone to use face masks whilst going out. She shared her knowledge from the sessions conducted by BRAC Afghanistan, and now she is regularly involved in supporting her family members and neighbors to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. “Team members from BRAC Afghanistan are like our family as they care for everyone's safety equally. We are grateful to BRAC and hope it will continue operations in our province,” shared Satara.



LEARNING MUST GO ON IN TANZANIA



I am very grateful to be a part of the BRAC Tanzania team, it gives me immense joy and pride in what we do for people in distress, especially during these terrible times of COVID 19” shared Joel Myengi Iginga, a Teacher of the Education, Empowerment and Life skills for Adolescent Girls and Young Children (EELAY) project.

Joel further added that “During the COVID-19 lockdown, I have been supporting the learners through our newly established online platforms. As an English teacher I provide assignments,

follow up with them, make sure I'm available for their queries, and ensure that they are engaged in learning”.

The EELAY project team has customised the operating approach to ensure learners can progress with their studies even during these unprecedented times.

BRAC Tanzania strives to support vulnerable people, especially children and young women, despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE

“I wanted to learn about small scale aquaculture and so was eager to participate,” said Thein Win, a participant of BRAC Myanmar’s Small–Scale Aquaculture Investments for Livelihoods and Nutrition project in the village of Inn Kone, Madaya Township.

BRAC Myanmar supports communities with not only fish seed but also aquaculture based technical support in partnership with WorldFish and USAID. During COVID–19 this support was conducted via mobile phones using instant messaging applications. Moreover, BRAC Myanmar, with support from it’s generous donors, supplied a total of 2000 items including hand sanitisers, masks, carbolic soap bars, cotton masks and 48 thermometers were distributed among approximately 600 participants. As a result, both programme participants, facilitators and aquaculture promoters will be able to attend meetings and training sessions in a way that maintains effective hygiene during data collection or focus group discussions.



Thein confirmed “it is not easy to buy the things we need to protect us in our daily lives. So we are thankful for the distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) by BRAC Myanmar.”

Furthermore, the Chief of Inn Kone, Tun Win, said he was grateful that BRAC staff were assisting people in the village and “wearing masks and using hand gel to make sure they are helping in a way that compiles with the Ministry of Health instructions.”

UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES



Myanmar: Garment workers, who have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic, are receiving financial assistance through a 5 million euro (K7.9 billion) European Union emergency cash fund. Since 1st May, this initiative has distributed payments to a growing number of recipients, reaching 12,913 individuals and distributing K1.4 billion in payments. Recipients include over 11,000 women factory workers from Yangon, Patheingyi, Mandalay, Bago, Magway and elsewhere across the country.



Nepal: Some provinces in Nepal are planning to build isolation centers and hospitals and have asked the Ministry of Health and health partners for any help they can provide including human resources, materials or financial assistance.

Although domestic and international flights have been halted until the end of June, Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) has conducted 22 international and 11 domestic chartered flights since the lockdown was imposed on 24th March, primarily for bringing medicines and equipment in for the Government.



Philippines: The Government of Philippines is undertaking the necessary initiatives to ensure that education is not entirely disrupted due to the ongoing lockdown and the closing of schools. The presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Martin Andanar said that the Department of Education's proposal to utilize the state-run channel, IBC-13, as a platform for distance learning among public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic will greatly benefit the Filipino youth as they will get the chance to be taught by the best teachers in the country wherever they are in the Philippines.



Sierra Leone: The total number of cases is now 909 with 47 deaths and 491 recoveries. Due to the increase in the number of cases, BRAC Sierra Leone will review its full return to work by month end. Therefore, staff will continue working from home on a rotational basis. Furthermore, BRAC is continuing with community sensitization activities using door to door methodology. The government has issued a directive about the compulsory use of masks by everyone in public places.



South Sudan: In an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Government of South Sudan has implemented significant travel restrictions within the country. In order to continue to move forward with its Community Based Education for Out-of-School Girls and Vulnerable Children (CoBE) project, BRAC South Sudan

has requested permission from the Government to allow staff to travel to the field. The Ministry of Government, Education and Instruction (MoGEI) has been very supportive of the CoBE project and has been working with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to facilitate the travel of BRAC staff. The government is willing to grant special travel permission to BRAC staff who they can confirm are free of COVID–19, and they offered to prioritize testing of BRAC staff. Representatives of the MoH visited the BRAC office on Tuesday, 26th May, and Thursday, 28th May and performed COVID–19 testing of all BRAC staff.



Uganda: The Ugandan Government announced the easing of vehicle movement so long as no more than three people are in the vehicle at one time. However, there is still a restriction on the use of motorcycles. Public transportation is scheduled to reopen from 5th of June at half capacity with an increase in fares, while commuters and operators are to strictly abide by COVID–19 prevention practices such as wearing masks. Additionally, the government has declared that the reopening of schools has been postponed until July.



BRAC INTERNATIONAL PRIORITISES THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF ITS STAFF AND PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

Useful links

If you would like to find more detail about the current situation in each country, we recommend the following sources:

[Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases tracker](#)

Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University

[A selection of graphics: Tracking the global outbreak](#)

BBC News Website

[Key Economic Policy Responses to COVID19](#)

International Monetary Fund

[BRAC's Global Response Portal](#)

How BRAC International responding to COVID-19

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