

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Standard Chartered and BRAC to provide entrepreneurship development support for Covid-19 affected returnee migrant workers



Photo credit: BRAC

Dhaka, 24 July 2021 – Standard Chartered Bangladesh and BRAC have announced the launch of a Covid-19 response initiative that will work with returnee migrant workers to ensure economic self-reliance through skills and entrepreneurship development. The Standard Chartered Foundation is financing the two-year project titled “Covid-19 recovery: Entrepreneurship Training and Gainful Employment for Returnee Migrants Affected by Covid-19 in Bangladesh”.

According to the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment, more than four lac (400 thousand) migrants returned to their home country within a year due to the ongoing pandemic. Recent BRAC survey findings suggest that half of the returnee migrants could not find gainful employment upon their return.

Under this project, the returnee migrants affected by Covid-19 will be supported with emergency arrival assistance, counselling, entrepreneurship training followed by in-kind financial assistance as business award money to start their new business, which will support their sustainable economic reintegration. The project will also link beneficiaries with microfinance institutes (MFIs) to facilitate access to finance and provide emergency and psycho-social support.

The project will identify and trace beneficiaries through several sources, including the airport, community members, hotline and other referrals. Three Reintegration Support Centres will be established under the project. Preference will be given to more vulnerable demographics, particularly women and youths aged between 18 and 35 years. Beneficiaries will be identified from three districts - Dhaka, Chattogram and Cumilla having particular concentrations of returnee population focusing on localities heavily affected by the pandemic.

Naser Ezaz Bijoy, chief executive officer, Standard Chartered Bangladesh, said, “The return of migrant workers could be seen as a challenge for our economy, but it is also an opportunity. Through harnessing the skills and knowledge, they have gained throughout their overseas careers and channelling it towards entrepreneurship and gainful employment opportunities, our remittance earners, will not only ensure their own economic self-reliance but also create more opportunities for the broader community, multiplying the recovery momentum at the root-levels.”

He added, “We are delighted to work with BRAC on this initiative, adopting the reintegration model implemented by BRAC since 2006, which has already helped 3.5 million people across 64 districts of Bangladesh.”

Asif Saleh, executive director, BRAC said, “For systematic changes, a meaningful partnership is required for the welfare of migrant workers in Bangladesh. Covid-19 left many migrants jobless with new learning where for all actors, government and non-government need to work together to support returnee migrants for their economic and social reintegration back into our society. We have to do more work with fewer resources – there comes partnership. The main focus is to support returnee migrant workers with entrepreneurship skills development and other support services for small-scale businesses that will change and improve the local economy.”

To meet the immediate pandemic challenges faced by our communities, Standard Chartered has been working with development sector partners to deliver aid and essentials to the communities hit hard by the pandemic and support frontline health services. To enable longer-term recovery through skills development and workforce reintegration, the Bank is working with UCEP Bangladesh to reach economically vulnerable individuals who have lost their livelihoods due to the impact of the pandemic. For 2021, Standard Chartered Bangladesh has announced a BDT 135 million (USD 1.6 million) strategic Covid-19 response action plan that supports healthcare and immediate assistance, regenerate livelihood and catalyse long-term growth.

BRAC, along with the Bangladesh government, has taken multiple initiatives for the sustainable reintegration of returnee migrants. Besides BRAC’s own fund, these initiatives have also been supported by other development partners, including the Royal Danish Embassy to Bangladesh, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and European Union.

The Standard Chartered Foundation is a new addition to this donor list. Since 2006, BRAC Migration Programme has been working in migration-prone districts to promote returnee migrants’ sustainable reintegration, ensure safe migration and raise awareness to prevent cross-border human trafficking.

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Photo Credit: BRAC

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[About the Standard Chartered Foundation](#)

The Standard Chartered Foundation (SCF) is a charitable organisation that tackles inequality by promoting greater economic inclusion for disadvantaged young people, particularly girls, young women and people with visual impairments, through programmes focused on education, employability, entrepreneurship and eye health.

Established in 2019, SCF is a registered charity in England and Wales (charity number 1184946) and is the lead delivery partner for Futuremakers by Standard Chartered, a global initiative to tackle inequality. Futuremakers includes projects that support economic recovery for communities impacted by COVID-19. www.sc.com/scfoundation

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