



# Community Radio in Bangladesh:

## Using trusted voices to reach vaccine-resistant groups in Bangladesh



*Dr. Kazi Faisal Mahmud*

**Breakthrough ACTION Bangladesh**



# The Problem

## Situation overview

- High burden of COVID-19, with 3 major waves of infection since March 2020.
  - 1,957,200 confirmed cases through May 2022.
- National vaccination program launched by the GOB on January 27, 2021, with a target of vaccinating 80% (over 130 million people).
  - First phase aimed to vaccinate 39.5 million population aged 40 years and older.
  - Initially there was a lack of interest and low registration.
  - 46% of the adult population reported vaccine hesitancy (April 2021 rapid assessment).
  - Only 18% of eligible people had registered for the vaccine (63% male and 37% female).
- High need to address major barriers to vaccination, including:
  - Lack of knowledge about vaccines and vaccination process.
  - Conspiracy beliefs regarding effectiveness, consequences, side effects.



# The Solution

- **Actions**

- Strategically focused on community radio to reach the vaccine-hesitant (elderly, rural, semi-urban, and very poor populations) with tailored messages.
- Partnered with one FM station and 16 community radio stations to air PSAs, drama series, entertainment-education shows, and eight Facebook Live phone-in shows.
- Customized folk songs to address barriers to
  - getting vaccinated.
- Conducted community miking using radio station infrastructure.



**Facebook Live ads for vaccine promotion**

# Outcomes and Key Learn

## Outcomes and Impact

- Reached 20.6 million people via 1 FM and 16 community radio stations.
- **“....After listening to episodes that addressed COVID-19 vaccine side effects, myths, misinformation, and rumors, she decided to get vaccinated.”**
  - Radio producer describing the impact of the radio programming on her mother-in-law’s decision to get vaccinated
- Lessons learned:
  - Community radio, social media, miking were useful channels for reaching vaccine hesitant.
  - A variety of formats (folk songs, dramas, talk shows, etc) sparked interest and allow for tailoring messages to audiences.



Radio listening group



In partnership with  
**Canada**

# THANK YOU

*D. Kazi Faisal Mahmud  
USAID's Breakthrough ACTION Bangladesh*

