



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BRAC USA contributes \$1.25 million to Bangladesh garment workers**

*The organization's Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund seeks donations from individuals, corporations and foundations for further support*

NEW YORK – The Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund, an initiative of BRAC USA, announces a grant of \$1.25 million to create employment opportunities and secure sustainable futures for 250 garment workers from the Rana Plaza factory complex, which collapsed last year near Dhaka, Bangladesh.

BRAC USA is seeking additional donations to this fund. “Rana Plaza was like Bangladesh’s 9/11,” says Susan Davis, president and CEO of BRAC USA. “Those who died on April 24 did so working in dangerous conditions to provide a better future for their families and make our own clothing more affordable. For those still grieving, there's nothing that can offset the loss of their loved ones. But we can and should show our solidarity with those who survived.

“We're grateful to those who have contributed to the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund so far, and welcome these contributions as a crucial first step,” Davis adds. “But more is needed. We ask individuals, corporations and others who have benefited from the hard work of Bangladeshi garment workers to challenge themselves to give more.”

The grant issued this month is the second of the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund, which BRAC USA created in March as a part of renewed push for Bangladesh garment workers in the run-up to the one-year anniversary of Rana Plaza, which collapsed on April 24, 2013, killing more than 1,100 people.

Services provided to former Rana Plaza workers will include livelihood training, professional development, entrepreneurship training, assistance with access to employment, and personal counseling support. Services will be provided by BRAC, the global development organization based in Bangladesh, of which BRAC USA is an independent North American affiliate.

### **BRAC USA**

110 William Street  
29<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
p 212-808-5615 | f 1 917 591 5804 | [www.bracusa.org](http://www.bracusa.org)

The grant comes closely after the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund's first grant in late March, a \$2.2 million donation to the Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund, which supports victims of the Rana Plaza disaster and their families. BRAC USA's Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund seeks to address victim needs and garment worker safety concerns in part by contributing a portion of every gift to the Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund, established in November 2013 by a multi-stakeholder coalition with the International Labor Organization serving as neutral chair.

"Bangladesh has seen significant gains in living standards, halving poverty rates in the last 20 years, thanks largely to women's empowerment. The garment industry has played a tremendous role in this," said Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of BRAC, last month when the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund was announced. "But these gains will mean little if we allow tragedies like Rana Plaza to continue. The words 'Made in Bangladesh' should be a mark of pride, not shame."

BRAC's involvement in Rana Plaza relief began in the immediate hours after the building's collapse, when first-response medical teams from BRAC's health, nutrition and population program worked alongside the Bangladesh Army's medical teams at the site. Later, staff and counselors from BRAC, BRAC University and Dhaka University provided psychosocial support to 473 survivors and victims' families. The BRAC Limb and Brace Center in Savar, the Dhaka subdistrict in which Rana Plaza was located, provided braces to 29 survivors with spinal injuries and prosthetic limbs to an additional 12 survivors.

With support from others, BRAC will continue to provide financial support, livelihood training, seed capital and apprenticeship training to hundreds more victims. Meanwhile, working with other stakeholders, including retailers, government, trade unions and factory owners, BRAC is advocating for a long-term solution to Bangladesh worker safety issues.

BRAC USA welcomes additional contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. Walmart, Asda, Walmart Foundation, The Children's Place, Gap Foundation, VF Foundation and others, including many individuals, have already made initial contributions. Donations to the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund will be directed to three specific program areas: support for the Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund, continued support for BRAC's work to provide counseling and rehabilitation to garment workers, and a reserve that can be used to support a "social safety net" for workers impacted by other tragedies.

All gifts to the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund are tax-deductible in the United States and will be administered by BRAC USA, an independent 501(c) 3 charitable

organization registered in New York State, with fiduciary responsibility resting with its board of directors.

## **ABOUT BRAC**

BRAC, a development organization founded in Bangladesh in 1972, is a global leader in creating opportunities at scale as a means to end poverty. With more than 100,000 employees, it is the world's largest non-governmental organization, touching the lives of an estimated 135 million people in 11 countries using a wide array of antipoverty tools such as microfinance, education, healthcare, legal rights training and more.

Learn more at [BRAC.net](http://BRAC.net).

## **ABOUT BRAC USA**

BRAC USA is an independent, US-based grantmaking affiliate of BRAC formed in 2006 to advance and support BRAC's global mission to create opportunities to unleash human potential and end poverty.

Learn more at [www.bracusa.org](http://www.bracusa.org).

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

**Scott MacMillan**

**T: 212 808 5615**

**C: 508 310 3018**

**[scott@bracusa.org](mailto:scott@bracusa.org)**