

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR GENDER, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (CGSRHR)

Established in 2008, The Centre aims to promote a broader understanding of gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Bangladesh and in the region through research, policy, advocacy and training activities. Using both academic and action-based research, the Centre generates knowledge and translates it into advocacy-based action for social change. Research topics under the Centre include HIV/AIDS, reproductive health service, gender-based violence, child marriage, digital tools for SRHR, bodily rights and behaviour change communication.

To promote SRHR, the Centre organises and conducts short trainings and courses that aim to stimulate critical thinking and reflections among practitioners. The Centre also facilitates advocacy efforts with various partners and networks to bring about greater awareness on relevant areas of SRHR work. Recent advocacy efforts have addressed SRHR and law, masculinity and men's sexual health, and rights-based issues of minorities and disadvantaged communities.

RESEARCH PROJECTS ONGOING IN 2022

- COUNTERING BACKLASH AND RECLAIMING GENDER JUSTICE

PI: Professor Sabina Faiz Rashid, Dean and Director, CGSRHR, BRAC JPGSPH.

Coordinator:

- Raafat Hassan, Senior Research Associate, BRAC JPGSPH.

Timeline: October 2019 -2024

Objective:

- Understanding the backlash against women's rights and gender justice;
- Addressing the erosion of gender agendas, their co-option and its stereotyping effects;
- Advancing new opportunities for women's movements and rights defenders to reclaim gender justice;
- Enhance the understanding and capacities needed – and identify opportunities – for women's rights organisations and other gender justice defenders.

Methodology: Qualitative

Donor: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

Partners: Leading institute - Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

Partner countries/ regions - India, Brazil, UK, Kenya, Uganda and Middle East regions.

- MOBILISING FOR A RESEARCH REVOLUTION TO ENSURE LGBTIQ INCLUSION IN ASIA: A HIGH-IMPACT, TRANSFORMATIVE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP (MFARR-ASIA)

PI:

- Professor Sabina Faiz Rashid, Dean and Director, CGSRHR, BRAC JPGSPH.
- Peter Newman (University of Toronto)

Co-PI:

- Farhana Alam, Assistant Director, CGSRHR, BRAC JPGSPH;
- Selima Sara Kabir, Assistant Research Coordinator, BRAC JPGSPH;
- Maruf Rahman, Research Assistant, BRAC JPGSPH.

Coordinator: Maruf Rahman, Research Assistant, BRAC JPGSPH.

Timeline: November 2019 - March 2024

Objectives:

- To generate a shared understanding of characteristics and priorities of LGBTIQ inclusion in six sectors: education, employment, family, violence/security, health and political participation;
- To measure and monitor LGBTIQ inclusion in four countries (India, Thailand, Bangladesh and Hong Kong) over time;
- To identify model programs and initiatives, and good practices to support LGBTIQ inclusion;
- To increase access to and use of knowledge by community-based organization (CBO) and intergovernmental organization (IGO) partners through innovative knowledge mobilization, including participatory video.

Methodology: Mixed method

Donor: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Partners:

- Oboyob: Diversity Circle
- Bandhu Social Welfare Society

- **OUR VOICES, OUR FUTURES**

PI: Farhana Alam, Assistant Director, BRAC JPGSPH; Maruf Rahman, Research Assistant

Coordinator:

- Sajib Rana, Research Associate.

Timeline: 2021-2025

Objective:

- Our Voices, Our Futures (OVOF) is a global South-led consortium, comprising CREA, the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE), the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), UHAI – The East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative and WO=MEN. Consortium partners are complemented by strategic partner IM-Defensoras, a Mesoamerican women’s human rights defenders (WHRDs) organization. BRAC JPGSPH is working with CREA as a national level partner in this project.
- OVOF will amplify voices and increase the visibility of structurally silenced women in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan and Uganda (alphabetically named), resulting in structurally silenced women taking their rightful places in civic space and participating across three key spaces: online space, physical public space and legal and policy space. OVOF is unique among myriad interventions targeting gender equality and women’s rights because it specifically aims to achieve the inclusion of structurally silenced women within broader feminist movements, where fragmentation

has led to the historical exclusion of structurally silenced women even, at times, from feminist movements themselves.

- OVOF aims to uplift women who are structurally silenced due to their gender identity and/or their chosen form of labour (such as sex workers, working online and on-ground) and/or their activism (women human rights defenders or WHRDs). This structural silencing is systemic and by design, as global civic space is being actively narrowed and intentionally degraded by state actors as well as by non-state, anti-gender, and anti-rights forces. OVOF work will defend and expand this civic space, online and on-ground. It will build capacities of feminist movements and actors to engage in policy and lawmaking, and advance gender equality to demand their rights.

Methodology: Qualitative

Donor: CREA, India

Partners:

- SPaRC
- Oboyob

- **RESEARCH ON GLOBAL HEALTH, EQUITY AND RIGHTS: DIGITAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

PI: Professor Sabina Faiz Rashid, Dean and Director CGSRHR, BRAC JPGSPH

Co-PI: Farzana Misha, Assistant Professor, BRAC JPGSPH

Timeline: September 2021-August 2022

Objective: The project brings together anthropologists, human rights lawyers and global civil society networks for shared research, youth empowerment work, and policy engagement to promote human rights-based governance of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) in health.

Through participation in the Digital Health and Rights Project consortium:

- Analyze laws and policies, train junior researchers, and identify youth leaders from Bangladesh and Colombia to participate in transnational youth activist networks;
- To use legal and policy review and ethnographic research to develop case studies in Bangladesh and Colombia,
- To participate in developing policy recommendations that address human rights risks and opportunities linked to digital technologies and artificial intelligence in health.

Methodology: Qualitative

Donor: OSUN

Partner: The Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies (IHEID), BRAC University (BRAC) and the Universidad de los Andes (Andes)

- **IMPACT EVALUATION DESIGN FOR EVALUATION OF ADOLESCENT STUDENT PROGRAM (BANGLADESH) – QUALITATIVE COMPONENT**

PI: Professor Sabina Faiz Rashid, Dean and Director, CGSRHR, BRAC JPGSPH

Co-PI: Maheen Sultan, Acting Head and Senior Fellow Practice, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University.

Coordinator: Farhana Alam, Assistant Director, BRAC JPGSPH

Timeline: July 2022- October 2022

Objective:

This multi-year mixed-methods impact evaluation will evaluate the impact of the virtually delivered adolescent outreach programme based on growth mindset (GM) and girl rising (GR) interventions. with the overall aim to improve adolescent well-being and educational outcomes. The objective is to

equip the GoB with an evidence-based and cost-effective model before scaling-up the diverse components of the intervention package.

As GAGE is also interested in collecting panel data to inform other ongoing research the design will include questions on other related themes that shape adolescent experience, in line with the GAGE Conceptual Framework. This submission will cover the qualitative component of the mixed-methods design.

Methodology: Qualitative

Donor: ODI- GAGE

Partner: BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University.

- **SHARENET DOCUMENTARY PROJECT ON SEXUAL DIVERSITY**

Coordinator: Farhana Alam, Assistant Director, CGSRHR, BRAC JPGSPH

Timeline: January 2022 - December 2022

Methodology: Qualitative interviews and FGDs

Donor: Sharenet International

- **SITUATION ANALYSIS AND DESIGN SUPPORT FOR ENABLING DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN VULNERABLE WOMEN BENEFIT PROGRAMME IN URBAN**

PI: Dr Farzana Misha

Objective: Specific objectives of Phase I (Situational Analysis Phase) include:

- a. To understand and become aware of the overall situation of digital financial inclusion, women's empowerment, and digital cash, taking into account possible opportunities, the bottlenecks and how to address them.
- b. To realize the key obstacles in the ecosystem which are keeping women from accessing and using digital financial products and services.
- c. To investigate the current practice and barriers for inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups, particularly women, as well as initiatives the Government can take to ensure greater inclusion in social protection platform and promote greater use of digital financial products and services.
- d. To review the documentations, frameworks and policies of the Financial Service Provider (FSPs) and recommend steps to ensure beneficiaries' rights are intact.
- e. To assess the digital financial products and services which are active in the market and if they match the contextual requirements. 52
- f. To provide recommendations of the activities and interventions that could be taken to enhance women's access, usage and benefits from digital financial products and services.

Specific objectives of Phase II (Advocacy to Disseminate Findings Phase) include:

- a. To develop financial tools and guidance to help integrate and promote digital financial inclusion and assist women's economic empowerment.
- b. To create digital financial literacy training materials catered to the specific needs of the beneficiaries of VWB.
- c. To craft a clear and effective communication strategy and awareness training tools to help ease the access of DFS and ways to integrate them within the VWB programme design.
- d. To develop business case and specifications for gender smart digital financial products and services, taking into consideration the current trend of the VWB beneficiaries' access to Digital Financial Services (DFS), usage and whether there are possible business gains for the FSPs.

- e. Work with WFP in advocacy actions with key players from the private sector, Ministries, FSP regulatory authority and FSPs for promotion of new business case.
- f. Assist WFP and its concerned partners in the implementation of the capacity building and training to the beneficiaries of VWB on the usage of DFS products.
- g. Help WFP to spread the learnings, and share the experience of the partnership in national and global knowledge sharing platforms.

Methodology: Qualitative

Donor: WFP (funds from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)

Partners: LightCastle Partners, WFP, MoWCA