

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS AT BRAC JPGSPH

Centre of Excellence for Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (CGSRHR)

The Centre aims to promote a broader understanding of gender relations/power, reproductive health, and sexuality and bodily rights 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 and structural changes. The Centre also facilitates advocacy efforts with various partners through online and offline national and global knowledge networks. Dr Sabina Faiz Rashid, Professor and Dean is the Director of the Centre. Bachera Aktar and Farhana Alam are Assistant Directors of the Centre.

1. Right Here Right Now (RHRN)

The objective of this project is to strengthen cooperation within and across national, regional and international levels to undertake concerted advocacy for a progressive and inclusive SRHR agenda; and to advocate and hold governments accountable for their adoption of progressive and inclusive policies (and budgets thereof) for the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly SRH services, including safe abortion.

Research Method: Qualitative (Exploratory)

Timeline: July 2017-October 2020

Focal person: Kuhel Islam, kuhel@bracu.ac.bd

Donor: RUTGERS

2. Promoting Rights Through Inclusion and Empowerment (Training and Advocacy)

BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health's Centre for Gender and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (CGSRHR) is working with Bangladesh Legal Aid Services and Trust (BLAST) to implement a capacity building and advocacy project titled "Promoting rights through inclusion and empowerment" with funding from RFSU, a Swedish organization.

Dialogue sessions will be held at selected private universities in Dhaka where sessions titled "Law, Love, and Life" will take place. These sessions are training on human rights, gender and SRHR for the students. Additionally, film competitions will be held across Bangladesh where issues around human rights, gender, SRHR and mental health will be addressed, with major focus on gender-based violence.

Training and Advocacy: Implementation Program

Timeline: Jan 2019-December 2020

Donor: RFSU

Focal Person: Anushka Zafar, anushka.zafar@bracu.ac.bd

3. A Qualitative Evaluation of BRAC Humanitarian Play Lab (HPL) Model in Rohingya Camps in Bangladesh

To evaluate the impact of BRAC's Humanitarian Play Lab (HPL) model on Rohingya children aged 0-6 years in terms of Early Childhood Development (ECD) through play-based learning in humanitarian settings while preserving cultural aspects and practices and the impact it has on social cohesiveness.

Research Method: Qualitative (grounded theory)

Timeline: March 2019 - July 2019 (in official papers)

Donor: BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BIED)

Focal Person: Nazrana Khaled, nazrana.khaled@bracu.ac.bd

4. A Story of the Evolution of BRAC Humanitarian Play Lab (HPL) in Rohingya Camps of Bangladesh

To undertake a process documentation study outlining the story of BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BIED) and BRAC Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme (HCMP) run Humanitarian Play Lab (HPL) for children aged 0-6 years in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar.

Research Method: Qualitative (Process Documentation)

Timeline: The PD began in Feb 2019 and will continue till 2023. The first phase of the process documentation exercise is complete.

Donor: BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BIED)

Focal Person: Nazrana Khaled, nazrana.khaled@bracu.ac.bd

5. BRAC – Disrupting Cross Border Trafficking Networks in Jashore, Bangladesh

The main aim of this research is to reduce the vulnerability of children and women to trafficking through capacity building, service integration, awareness raising and advocacy and support the repatriation and reintegration of Bangladeshi child victims of sex trafficking in India. In response to the gaps and barriers, BRAC has designed an evidence-driven and potentially scalable model that integrates activities and outcomes aimed at improving Protection, Prevention, Prosecution, Partnerships and promoting Learning. BRAC JPGSPH will

be working with them as research partner and will contribute to the development of various tools for awareness building and designing intervention through formative research and needs assessment including a baseline-end line survey to measure the effectiveness of the model.

Research Method: Mixed Method

Timeline: 15 November 2019- 15 May 2021

Donor: Children Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) - UK

Focal Person: Farhana Alam, farhana.alam@bracu.ac.bd

6. BKASH – Digital cash transfers and women’s social and economic empowerment (brac school research in collaboration with harvard university – in three countries)

The project encompasses two major research activities: 1) a scoping review of the literature; and 2) case studies for two countries representing different journeys on the path toward penetration of digital financial services. Throughout both activities, the project aims to explicitly focus on the critical role played by gender in the relationship between digital financial services and health, with a focus on how women may differently experience both the benefits and risks of new innovations

PI: Dr Sabina Faiz Rashid, Professor;

Coordinator: Farzana Misha, Coordinator

Implemented by: Centre of Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Timeline: January 2020 – June 2020

Partner and Donor: Gates Foundation, USA

Research Fund: USD 100,000

7. Mobilizing for a research revolution to ensure LGBTIQ inclusion in Asia: A high-impact, transformative international partnership (MFARR-Asia)

To generate shared understanding of characteristics and priorities of LGBTIQ inclusion in six sectors: education, employment, family, violence/security, health and political participation. This research will also measure and monitor LGBTIQ inclusion in four countries (India, Thailand, Bangladesh and Hong Kong) over time and 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.

Timeline: April 2019- March 2026

Donor: The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Focal Person: Farhana Alam Bhuiyan, farhana.alam@bracu.ac.bd

8. Nationwide Study Of Sexual And Reproductive Health And Rights (SRHR) Of Persons With Disabilities (PWDS) In Bangladesh

This study aims to conduct primary research among PWDs to better understand their SRH needs, knowledge about SRH, SRH sufferings, perception around sex and sexuality and barriers in accessing SRHR services. The study will review existing interventions and/or services relevant to SRHR of PWDs and generate new knowledge by reviewing laws and policies relevant to disability and SRHR.

Coordinator and Focal Person: Tanvir Hasan, thasan@bracu.ac.bd

Donor: The Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh

9. Countering the Backlash, Reclaiming Gender Justice

A multi-country study across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East that aims to create the knowledge needed, and identify opportunities for women's rights organisations and other gender justice defenders to counter the backlash and address the erosion of gender objectives within development.

Timeline: July 2019 – June 2024

Focal person: Ishrat Jahan, Ishrat.jahan@bracu.ac.bd

Donor: SIDA

10. South Asian Regional SRHR Platform

The proposed South Asian Regional Platform on Gender and SRHR in Bangladesh and four other countries (India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), will support SRH organizations, practitioners, government champions, youth leaders, researchers and other key stakeholders who are committed to progressive social and political changes in Gender and SRHR issues in order to promote rights based approach in research, and to programming and policies. Through effective capacity building and ongoing dialogues and network meetings with a select group of targeted stakeholders from countries in the region, it will develop a comprehensive long term agenda, which prioritizes regional perspectives and needs on Gender and SRHR.

Timeline: Mar 2020- Feb 2020

Focal person: Farhana Alam Bhuiyan, Farhana.alam@bracu.ac.bd

Donor: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

11. Exploring the outcomes, successes and challenges of the soft skill training component of BRAC Skills Development Program (SDP)

To understand perceptions of beneficiaries and peer leaders regarding the soft skill training program, exploring the effect of soft skills training program on beneficiaries, and, exploring the successes and challenges of the soft skill training program to generate relevant recommendations for program strengthening and scale up.

Timeline: November, 2019- March 2020

Donor: BRAC SDP Program

Focal Person: Farzana Misha, farzana.misha@bracu.ac.bd

12. Randomized controlled trial of biometrically enabled mHealth system of BRAC MNCH Community Health Program

This study will be conducted in 36 selected districts of Bangladesh where BRAC mHealth program is being implemented at present. A randomized control trial comparing two groups of beneficiaries, one accessing only mHealth services and another with biometrically enabled mHealth services will be compared based on their maternal and child health outcomes and cost effectiveness of the intervention across three different time-points (February 2020, June 2020 and October 2020). Qualitative interviews from service providers will be used as a means to better comprehend the findings and explore the overall efficiency in resource implications (the costs), the management of the intervention and improved delivery of the services. It is expected that the use of this biometrically enabled mHealth intervention will result in improved maternal and child health outcomes along with an efficient health care management system for BRAC HNPP's maternal and child health care programme.

Research Method: Quantitative (Randomized Control Trial)

Timeline: Nov 2019- Dec 2020

Donor: Simprints

Focal Person: Tanvir Hassan, thasan@bracu.ac.bd

Centre of Excellence for Science of Implementation and Scale-Up (CoE-SISU)

The Centre conducts research, generates evidence, organizes stakeholder consultations and disseminates the results and findings to policymakers and key implementers for successful programme interventions. The Centre also works towards bridging the gap between evidence generation through implementation research and policy making and to address contextual challenges and bottlenecks in health service delivery. The Centre is directed by Dr Malabika Sarker, Professor and Associate Dean, and Director of Research.

1. The Ethics of Health Policy Experiments: A Global Framework for Design and Oversight

Health policy decisions that are crucial to ensuring the success of healthcare services and program delivery often have a weak evidence base. Unfortunately, much health policy-making is based largely on precedent, intuition, and politics – rather than on evidence. A new framework for health policy experiments, therefore, needs to be designed. This study involves piloting a deliberative interview technique as a central research tool in a larger study that seeks to refine ethical aspects of the design and oversight of public health policy experiments in the global context. Through the pilot phase, the research team aimed to find out if a new interviewing style based on the concept of deliberation can be applied globally, and whether or how such an approach may need to be culturally adapted to become an integral part of the study design for a global framework regarding public health policy experiments. The results analyzed will inform the main study design, which seeks to develop a global framework guiding ethical considerations within health policy experiments. This study, which is led by Heidelberg University, is carried out by an international team of researchers from Bangladesh, the United States, Tanzania, and Germany.

Research Methods: Qualitative (Conventional In-depth Interview) and Deliberative approach

Timeline: July 2018-August 2021

Donor: Wellcome Trust

Focal Person: Mrityika Barua, mrityika@bracu.ac.bd

2. Synthesis and Translation of Research and Innovations from Polio Eradication (STRIPE)

Synthesis and Translation of Research and Innovations from Polio Eradication (STRIPE). In the initial phase, the project intends to collect information of stakeholders including medical officers, health workers at sub-centres, PHCs, CHCs and district levels. This will be achieved through an online survey and paper-based survey using a questionnaire. In the next phase, the report findings will synthesize the information and the lessons learned from the experience into academic programs and training program in Implementation of Public Health Programs that will be offered through academic and training institutions, globally.

Research Method: Mixed method

Timeline: October 2017-December 2020

Donor: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USA

Focal Person: Humayra Binte Anwar, humayra.anwar@bracu.ac.bd

3. A Media Experiment to Reduce Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh

The aim of this study is to assess the relative importance of different motives for which husbands might use violence against their wives as well as the reasons for which low-income husbands use more violence than high-income husbands in Bangladesh. In addition, the study tests different interventions to reduce intimate partner violence.

Research Method: Quantitative (randomized control trial)

Timeline: June 2019 - May 2021

Donor: South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) with World Bank; and Canadian Grand Challenges

Focal Person: Mushfiquir Rahman, Mushfiquir.rahman@bracu.ac.bd

4. Old Age Allowance

The main objective is to make the selection of beneficiaries more pro-poor by enabling the local government representatives to apply the eligibility criteria prescribed by the national government and make the selection based on the provided data on the target group. The impact evaluation will be based on comparing eligibility of beneficiaries in control and treatment group using one commonly used poverty measure namely the PPI score and one eligibility measure reflecting the rules as formulated in the government guidelines

Research Method: Quantitative (Impact Evaluation)

Timeline: July 2019-December 2020

Donor: University of Zurich, Switzerland; Thurgau Economic Research Institute, University of Konstanz, Germany

Focal Person: Atonu Rabbani, atonu.rabbani@bracu.ac.bd

5. Millions Cool Roofs Challenge

The objective of this study is to improve access to sustainable cooling through the rapid scaling of cool roofs in countries with large numbers of people facing heat stress risks.

Research Method: Qualitative

Timeline: July 2019-December 2020

Donor: The Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), France

Focal Person: Shams Shabab Haider, shabab.haider@bracu.ac.bd

6. Climate Change, Migrations and Health Systems Resilience in Haiti and Bangladesh (ClimHB)

The Climate Change, Migration and Health Systems Resilience (ClimHB) project is an applied and interdisciplinary research project in Social Science and Public Health, which aims to analyse the capacities and vulnerabilities of health systems in Haiti and Bangladesh, through the lens of climate change-induced migration flows. Funded by the National Research Agency (ANR) as part of the presidential call "Make Our Planet Great Again" (MOPGA), this project is part of an international research project in the social sciences and public health, focusing on public policies and health systems.

Research Method: Mixed Method

Timeline: January 2019-December 2021

Donor: ANR – French National Research Agency

Focal Person: Muhammed Nazmul Islam, nazmul.islam@bracu.ac.bd

Centre of Excellence for Health Systems and Universal Health Coverage (CoE HS&UHC)

The Centre aims to facilitate efforts to accelerate evidence based, equitable and sustainable action towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Bangladesh. The Centre facilitates advocacy through awareness-building campaigns in UHC forums, experience sharing and research dissemination through workshops, policy dialogues, seminars - both within and outside the country.

The Centre is Directed by Dr Syed Masud Ahmed, Professor.

1. Transparency, Accountability and Good Governance for Health System Strengthening and Advancing UHC Agenda in Bangladesh: The Role of Frontline Healthcare Service Providers in Improving Performance

The study seeks to explore practices that are related to the delivery of responsive, equitable and quality services by the health care providers and managers at the primary health care (PHC) levels. This is expected to align motivation of the frontline health workers with the macro level expectations from the health services delivery network, and strengthen the PHC system for better performance.

Research Method: Qualitative and Quantitative

Timeline: August 2017-August 2021

Donor: UK Department for International Development (DFID)

Focal Person: Dr Nahitun Naher, nahitun.naher@bracu.ac.bd

2. A Global Social Sciences Network for Infectious Threats and Antimicrobial Resistance

Create, pilot and evaluate curricula for training social scientists in preparedness and response to infectious threats and through curricular development and piloting social science knowledge of infectious threats among non-social sciences actors. The study will adapt, test, and evaluate vulnerability assessment tools on the ground and develop engagement models to facilitate collaboration across multiple stakeholders.

Project Type: Capacity Building and Program Implementation

Timeline: January 2019-December 2021

Donor: European Union (EU)

Focal Person: Dr Nahitun Naher, Nahitun.naher@bracu.ac.bd

Centre of Excellence for Urban Equity and Health (CUEH)

This Centre facilitates inter-sectoral research, training, policy and results-oriented action with a focus on health equity challenges of the urban poor, particularly on governance in urban health; and motivates evidence-based dialogue and decision-making, and supports the partnerships and networking among different stakeholders. The Centre is Directed by Dr Zahidul Quaiyyum, Professor and Dr Md Tanvir Hasan, Assistant Professor.

1. ARISE - Accountability and Responsiveness in Informal Settlements for Equity

The objective of this study is to develop interdisciplinary and multi-sectorial partnerships between researchers, non-governmental organizations, community, service providers,

government departments and other non-government and private actors to co-produce and test new understandings, evidence and solutions for improving health and wellbeing of the urban informal settlement dwellers.

Research Method: Mixed Method (Sequential)

Timeline: Dec 2018-Feb 2024

Donor: UK Research and Innovation's Global Challenges

Focal Person: Bachera Akter, Bachera.akter@bracu.ac.bd

2. Pathways to Equitable Healthy Cities

The objective of this study is to integrate and coordinate research and stakeholder engagement that support evidence-based policies aimed at improving population health, health equity and environmental sustainability in cities around the world. The Hub, and its projects, will achieve this objective through comparative studies that involve participatory research and coproduction of knowledge among academic researchers, policy makers and practitioners, and civil society; developing models for prospective policy evaluation.

Research Method: Mixed Method (Simultaneous)

Timeline: Jun 2018-Feb 2022

Donors: Wellcome Trust through Imperial College London

Focal Person: Dr Tanvir Hasan, thasan@bracu.ac.bd

3. Forced Displacement and Education: Building the Evidence for What Works

The study will work towards advancing its understanding on education for the forcibly displaced as part of a broader education sector agenda of improving learning outcomes for populations living in poverty, exclusion, or distress. Additionally, the study aims to improve its effectiveness regarding its role and contributions to facilitating transition and uptake from humanitarian education responses to long-term development agendas that can support sustainable access to quality education for the forcibly displaced and the communities that host them.

Research Method: Qualitative (Observation, In-depth Interview)

Timeline: October 2018 – August 2019

Donor: The World Bank Group

Focal Person: Saira Parvin, saira.jolly@bracu.ac.bd

Centre of Excellence for Non-Communicable Diseases and Nutrition (CNCDN)

The Centre conducts and facilitates discovery, development, and delivery of research on NCDs and nutrition. The Centre also strengthens the capacity of health care providers, policymakers, researchers and program managers on prevention, treatment, and control of NCDs & malnutrition. The Centre also carries out evidence-based advocacy for scaling-up prevention, treatment, and control activities of NCDs and malnutrition.

Dr Malay Kanti Mridha, Professor, is the Director of the Centre.

1. Understanding the Patterns and Determinants of Health in South Asian People - South Asia Biobank

The objective of this research project is to establish a network of community based, NCD surveillance sites in Bangladesh, India North, India South, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Research Method: Quantitative (Cross Sectional)

Timeline: February 2017-March 2021

Donor: National Institute for Health Research, UK.

Focal Person: Mehedi Hassan, Mehedi.hasan@bracu.ac.bd