



TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

OXFAM Research for Change—Grant

BACKGROUND

Oxfam, a global movement committed to combating poverty and promoting social justice, has played a pivotal role in Bangladesh for over five decades. Our journey began in 1970 when we stepped forward to assist cyclone victims. During the 1971 Liberation War, Oxfam stood by the people of Bangladesh, earning the honor of being recognized as a Friend of the Bangladesh Liberation War in 2012.

Over the past 52 years, Oxfam in Bangladesh has been working as a trusted development partner of Bangladesh, aiming to ensure Economic Development, Poverty Alleviation, Women's Empowerment, and Climate Justice. Lessons from Bangladesh's development experience highlight the importance of functional informal institutions, effective regulation, and state capacity.

As Bangladesh looks ahead to the next 50 years, it faces a mix of challenges, including poverty, gender inequality, climate change, and human security. Oxfam's vision is to create a vibrant and equitable society where women and men are empowered. We work collaboratively with civil society organizations, NGOs, universities, private sector companies, and government entities. By influencing policy, building capacity, and mobilizing voices, we strive for transformative social change. Gender equality, economic justice, and resilience remain at the heart of our mission.

In this journey, Oxfam stands as a beacon of hope, advocating for a Bangladesh where every individual's voice matters, and resilient communities thrive.

Keeping this in mind, Oxfam is introducing the Oxfam Research for Change—Grant, offering independent researchers and post-graduate students an opportunity to pursue their research/thesis paper under the guidance and support of Oxfam's extensive resources and network.

KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE GRANT:

The research work undertaken with this grant will aim to meet one or more of the following objective(s):

- Investigate barriers faced by women and / or gender diverse people in accessing economic opportunities. Understand the impact of gender norms; unequal, unpaid, or underpaid pay; and limited access, use and control over resources.
- Identify patterns of economic exclusion. Propose strategies to enhance participation of women and / or gender diverse people in formal and informal sectors. For instance, exploring micro-enterprises run by women or analyzing gender wage gaps or social capital of women's self-help groups or networks.
- Engage with women-led or gender-interest groups and collect stories of resilience. Understand their needs, including gender-differentiated needs, priorities, and aspirations. Co-create solutions that empower women and / or gender diverse people economically.
- Study patterns and perceptions of gender-differentiated unpaid care and domestic work in either rural or urban context from the perspectives of men, women, employers, families, households, communities, policy makers, duty bearers and / or other relevant stakeholders. Propose



interventions and policy reforms to recognize and address unpaid care and domestic work to build equitable and transformative care movements and equitable redistribution of care work.

- Study the prevalence and impact of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) at workplaces, public places, or families or on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Explore factors contributing to SGBV. Use research findings to advocate for policies and practices that protect survivors of SGBV. Analyze or propose interventions such as compensation(s) for survivors of SGBV, community-based interventions to prevent such violence.
- Investigate livelihoods of resource-poor women and / or gender diverse people, especially from the informal sector, such as street vendors, domestic workers, tea garden workers, female fisherfolk, females in agriculture, informal/ home-based RMG workers and gig economy participants. Map their work conditions, income, and vulnerabilities, including gender-differentiated vulnerabilities.
- Assess existing policies, plans, legal frameworks and social safety nets for informal workers. Propose reforms to enhance their rights and well-being. Explore interventions and capacity development programs that can enhance informal workers' skills, employability, agency, and social capital.
- Analyze policies, plans and frameworks related to education, healthcare, social safety nets and social services from a gender justice and social inclusion lens. Assess their impact on marginalized communities (such as low-income women and girls, gender diverse people, persons with disabilities (PWD)s, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk women, Mantas, Dalits, Rishis, Kaiputras).
- Use research insights to advocate for gender-responsive and inclusive policies, plans and frameworks and challenge discriminatory practices, gender, and social norms.

PREFERRED THEMES:

The "Oxfam Research for Change—Grant" brings an opportunity to engage young researchers in critical explorations that intersect with Bangladesh's socio-economic landscape. This grant seeks to empower the next generation of change-makers, encouraging them to unravel complexities, propose innovative solutions, and contribute to a more equitable and resilient Bangladesh.

Applicants are requested to propose their topic relevant to the following themes-

- **Women's Economic Empowerment:** Despite remarkable progress, women in Bangladesh still encounter significant barriers to economic participation and decision-making. Cultural and gender norms, discriminatory practices, and limited access, use and control over resources (such as productive assets and resources, natural resources) hinder their ability to fully engage in the workforce and benefit from economic opportunities. Closing the gender gap in female labor force participation and economic empowerment is not only a matter of gender and social justice but also essential for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.
- **SRHR SGBV (Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence):** Issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) persist in Bangladesh. Limited access to comprehensive healthcare services, as well as legal recourse, coupled with harmful social and gender norms and practices, contributes to high rates of early marriage, maternal mortality, teenage pregnancies, and gender-based violence. Addressing these challenges is fundamental to ensuring the health, dignity, and autonomy of all individuals, particularly women and marginalized groups.



Moreover, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) at workplaces, public places as well as families, limits women and gender diverse people from fully realizing their rights and opportunities, including, but not limited to, access to education and income opportunities.

- **Informal Workers:** The informal sector plays a vital role in Bangladesh's economy, providing livelihoods for a substantial portion of the population. However, informal workers, including street vendors, domestic workers, agricultural laborers and fisherfolk, often lack job security, social protection, and access to basic rights. Formalizing the informal sector and improving working conditions are critical steps toward achieving inclusive and sustainable development. While women are contributing equally like their male counterparts to the country's socio-economic development, their work is not much recognized as 92% of them belong to the informal sector (Aspire to Innovate (a2i) Programme, 2022).
- **Social Inclusion:** Bangladesh is a diverse nation with various ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups. However, marginalized communities, including indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, gender diverse people, and individuals with varying identities, continue to face discrimination, exclusion, and limited opportunities for social participation. Promoting social inclusion is essential for building a cohesive society.

Unpaid care and domestic work: Although excluded from formal GDP calculations, unpaid, care and domestic work is the backbone of many economies, the wellbeing of a nation and is crucial for socio-economic development. Disproportionate responsibility for care work lies on women and girls, with narratives that are challenging to dismantle due to entrenched socio-cultural gender norms and perceptions. Lack of adequate care infrastructures by employers and government, adequate policies and frameworks, gender and social norms in families and communities, are some of the drivers of time poverty for women that inhibits their opportunities for paid as well as formal employment, escape poverty and access social protection. Women may face job constraints due to caregiving responsibilities. Side by side to unpaid care work in both urban and rural settings, women are engaged in a wide array of unpaid domestic work, such as in agriculture and fishing, which remains widely unrecognized and unaccounted for in the social and economic domains. **Overall Goal of the project**

This grant aims to foster positive change in Bangladesh by empowering young researchers. It's overarching goal is to contribute to a more equitable and resilient Bangladesh.

The overall goal of this grant will be reached through the achievement of the four key outcomes-

- **Outcome 1:** Enhanced understanding of economic opportunities for women and / or gender diverse people, promoting digital and financial inclusion, and addressing gender disparities in income and employment through exploration of successful models of women-led enterprises, access to credit, women's self-help groups or networks, and strategies to overcome barriers faced by women in the workforce.
- **Outcome 2:** Improved understanding of the intersection of sexual and reproductive health and rights with sexual and gender-based violence, which may lead to effective interventions to prevent and protect against SGBV, improve access to SRHR services, address SGBV at workplaces, public places, or families, and empower women to make informed choices about their reproductive health and rights.
- **Outcome 3:** Better understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by informal and underpaid workers (such as domestic workers, tea garden workers, informal or home-based RMG



workers, female fisherfolk, females in agriculture, day laborers, etc.) and identification of pathways for their economic inclusion, which can be explored through social protection mechanisms, policies and frameworks, skill development, and ways to enhance the livelihoods of informal and underpaid workers.

- **Outcome 4:** Improved strategies to promote social cohesion, reduce discrimination, and ensure marginalized groups have equal access, use and control over socio-economic resources and opportunities. Research can also focus on community entrepreneurship, cooperative initiatives, and awareness-building programs that foster inclusivity.
- **Outcome 5:** Improved strategies and interventions to recognize and build equitable and transformative care movements, including valuing women's work for equitable redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work.

ABOUT THE GRANT: Oxfam believes in the power of compassionate action to transform lives. This grant aims to empower young researchers who share our commitment to making a positive impact on Bangladesh's socio-economic landscape. Bangladesh, with its rich history and vibrant communities, faces multifaceted challenges—ranging from poverty and inequality to environmental degradation and climate change. And as the world moves forward, the gap between the challenges we face and the solutions we can advocate for becomes wider. To minimize this gap, this grant will support researchers to study the complexities of today's society and help us pave the way for a better world.

PREFERRED THEMES:

- ***Women's Economic Empowerment***
- ***SRHR SGBV (Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence)***
- ***Informal and Underpaid Workers***
- ***Social Inclusion***
- ***Unpaid Care and Domestic Work***

ELIGIBILITIES:

- Must be a Bangladeshi national.
- Have a **minimum bachelor's degree** (For Independent Researchers and University Graduates) **or are currently enrolled in the master's/planning for their postgraduate research proposal** with academic backgrounds in Development Studies, Gender Studies, Public Administration, Public Policy and Governance, Social Welfare, Geography, Media and Mass Communication, Journalism, Business, International Relations, Economics, Law, Environmental Science and Management, Disaster Management, Law, Sociology, Anthropology, Statistics, Public Health, Industrial Relations, Social Science, or any other relevant subjects.
- Sound understanding of Socio-Economic issues related to Bangladesh.
- Well habituated to writing research proposals, reports, and presentations.
- Openness to diverse opinions, and respect for the community.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: Applicant must submit the following 5 items as separate documents to be considered for the evaluation process-



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1. A Research/thesis proposal (**max 1500 words**) based on preferred themes following the provided template. **Find the template at the end of this document.**
2. A CV covering key previous experiences in research works.
3. For **Independent Researchers**, provide the name and contact details of at least **2 professional referees**. For **Students**, provide the name and contact details of **2 academic referees and 1 professional referee**.
4. Students must submit **a Nomination Paper/NOC** from their respective Department Head.

APPLICATION DEADLINE & HOW TO APPLY: Applicants must submit their required documents and application form **mentioning Subject line “Research for change grant application” at hrbd@oxfam.org.uk by 06 May 2024 11:59 PM.**

SELECTION PROCESS: The basic criteria for selection are-

- Relevance knowledge of the research work of contemporary issues relevant to the specified themes.
- Significance of the proposed research, including the importance and originality.
- The quality of the proposal in definition, clarity, and scope; what values the work will add to the relevant greater academia, why it is important, and how the reviewers will get to know the conclusions are valid.
- Capabilities and achievements of the applicant and the likelihood that the applicant will accomplish the proposed research; not only should the proposal demonstrate how the applicant has the technical know-how and ability to reach some significant conclusions, but that the conclusion is not preconceived. The proposal should convince the reviewer that there is something genuinely at stake with the applicants’ intended area of inquiry and that the research will yield noteworthy results.

RESPONSIBILITIES & DELIVERABLES:

- From scratch to finalize the research paper; grant recipients will explore and learn about the complexities of Bangladesh’s Socio-Economic situation, the challenges and way forward.
- Will finalize the research paper reflecting their learnings.

RESEARCH SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Grant Recipients will be required to submit their research papers by **30 June 2024 11:59 PM**, containing their finalized findings and outcomes.

BENEFITS:

- **Funding:** Top 8 Proposals will each receive a grant of 160,000 BDT (inclusive of all the costs of their fieldwork).
[Note: The Grant Recipients will receive their funding in three instalments — 1. First instalment will be disbursed following the Top 5 selection. 2. Second instalment will be disbursed during the halfway progression of their research. 3. Third instalment will be disbursed after their final research paper submission.]
- **Research Development:** The Grant Recipients will be encouraged to identify and define a pressing issue, develop hypothesis, and find solutions to, within the realm of their work that will eventually contribute to at least any of the following fields- Women’s Economic Empowerment, SRHR SGBV (Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence), Informal and



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Underpaid Workers, Social Inclusion, Unpaid Care and Domestic Work in Bangladesh. The recipients will receive support from Oxfam to improve and finalize their initial research topics proposed during the application stage.

- **Supervision and Mentorship:** Mentorship is an integral component of the program. Each Grant Recipient will be introduced to their relevant program under Oxfam that aligns with their proposed research, where they will receive guidance, supervision, and necessary resources that they need to conduct their research.

[Note: For Independent Researchers, Oxfam will oversee their research supervision. For Students, Oxfam will be involved as a co-supervisor, along with their academic supervisor to ensure the relevance of the research with the project.]

- **Networking:** Recipients will have the opportunity to connect with individuals, organizations, and networks who have similar interests and goals, including activists, specialists, and other stakeholders at both the national and international levels.
- **Capacity Strengthening:** During the research process, the fellows will have the opportunity to set their learning objectives through collaborative discussions with their relevant programs, and afterwards, engage in focused efforts towards achieving these objectives over the duration of the research.
- **Resources:** The recipients will have access to Oxfam's knowledge resources, network, research, and tools related to gender justice, climate justice, economic justice, humanitarian action, and disaster resilience.

Proposal Template:

| Sections must be in the proposal | Contents of each section | Maximum Word Limit of each section | Scoring Grid |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Title | The title should be specific, concise, and self-explanatory. | N/A | |
| Background | It includes the context, situation, problems, and literature gaps to introduce the research topic briefly, the proposed research hypothesis. | Maximum 400 words | |
| Research Questions | There might be 4-5 rationale research questions in bullet format that the study would like to address. | Maximum 200 words | |
| Aims and Objectives | Very precise, explicit, and achievable objectives that the study wants to achieve. | Maximum 200 words | |
| Methods and Techniques | This section should briefly describe the study area (study area map is | Maximum 400 words | |



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| | preferred), conceptual framework, precise methods, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection tools, techniques, and analysis process to achieve the objectives. | | |
| Expected Outcomes | How would the research findings impact the ground with actionable strategies, policy recommendations, interventions, or any way forward the study would bring up to reflect on the ground? How would the study contribute to the scholarly community? | Maximum 300 words | |
| Reference | APA format is preferable | N/A | |
| Total Score Allocation | | | |