

NEWSLETTER

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE 2024



During a plenary session, experts discuss key issues

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Urban Dhaka

Advancing Urban SRHR Through Innovation and Collaboration



A diverse network of experts participated in the Conference

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Key objectives:

Knowledge Sharing:

Presenting abstracts, case studies, and SRHR innovations.

Collaboration:

Foster connections among SRHR policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

Sustainability:

Promoting partnerships for long-term urban SRHR solutions.

Innovation:

Ignite creative approaches to tackling urban SRHR issues.

Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Dhaka (ISRHRD) project of Ipas Bangladesh organized the Scientific Conference 2024: Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Urban Dhaka on 11 December, funded by Global Affairs Canada and supported by HealthBridge Foundation of Canada. More than 200 participants and designated guests from diverse field of SRHR including relevant Government ministries and departments, particularly the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, along with representatives from Dhaka North and South City Corporation; Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project (UPHCSDP); development partners including Global Affairs Canada; professional bodies, academics, researchers, BKMEA representative, general practitioners, youth volunteers, INGOs, CSOs, SRHR experts along with the senior management and team members from implementing partners BAPSA, OGSB, RHSTEP and SERAC Bangladesh took part.

Aligning with the four objectives, discussions were focused on innovative solutions for the SRHR challenges faced in urban settings conducted through five issue-based plenary sessions, concluded with a policy session on addressing SRHR in Bangladesh.

Overall, the conference reinforced the importance of working together, taking collective action to tackle urban SRHR challenges, pursue necessary policy reforms and build long lasting sustainable solutions for the future.

Plenary sessions:

**Urban SRHR
-Strengthening
Primary Health
Care Settings**

**Advancing
SRHR in
Higher-Level
Health
Facilities**

**Advancing
SRHR in
Bangladesh**

**Tackling SGBV
in Urban
Context**

**Policy Session
on addressing
SRHR in
Bangladesh**

Youth Interaction with CSO Forum in the Context of SRHR for an Adolescent-Friendly Health System

HIGHLIGHT

Twelve youth activists passionate about advancing SRHR in Bangladesh had a unique opportunity to engage with seven diverse SRHR experts from SRHR CSO forum. Drawing from their own life experiences, the youth participants highlighted key challenges from a rights-based perspective, one by one. In response, the expert panel—already working on some of these issues—shared their insights and possible solutions. This youth driven intergenerational exchange fostered hope for addressing Bangladesh's complex, deeply rooted, and interconnected SRHR challenges.

Key
Issues
Spotlighted

Child Marriage using False Birth Certificates

Adolescents' Lack of knowledge on Contraception

Men's Role in Family Planning Decisions

SRHR Services for Persons with Disabilities

Mental Health Awareness for Adolescents

Parent-Child Communication

This plenary session was moderated by Ipas Bangladesh and hosted by CSO forum. This session wasn't just an exchange of ideas, it was a spark for action. By connecting youth with experts, the CSO Forum at Bangladesh National Youth Conference on Family Planning (BNYCFP) 2024, organized by SERAC Bangladesh reaffirmed the power of collective advocacy to build a healthier future for all.

The Civil Society Organization (CSO) Forum for Strengthening Sustainable SRHR Ecosystem in Bangladesh, convened by Ipas Bangladesh is an advocacy platform of 22 SRHR organizations with a diverse portfolio, including INGOs, NGOs, academic institutions, legal organizations, professional bodies, and feminist organizations.



Ongoing Study Investigates Family Planning Discontinuation Among Rohingya Women

RESEARCH



Images of data collection at the Rohingya camp
Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh



Ipas Bangladesh's ongoing Family Planning Discontinuation Study among Rohingya FDMN women has made significant progress. During the last quarter of 2024, seven bi-weekly follow-ups were ongoing simultaneously; a total of 2,714 follow-up interviews were conducted, and out of 629 participants (women aged 14–49 years), 192 women have finished all surveys. Research assistants conduct bi-weekly follow-up surveys, ensuring data accuracy through field visits and verification. The study is set to conclude by June 2025, with findings expected to improve sexual and reproductive health programs and interventions.

Ipas Bangladesh Observes 16 Days of Activism

Driving Change in Urban, Humanitarian and Media Spaces to end GBV

Ipas Bangladesh commemorated the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) under the theme 'UNITE to End GBV' in 2024. To raise awareness and drive action, a series of events were held from November 25 to December 10, engaging policymakers, public health professionals, CSOs,



School based campaign in Dhaka for adolescents' awareness against GBV

Photo Courtesy: SERAO Bangladesh



A collaborative rally was held in Cox's Bazar

Photo Courtesy: BAPSA

development partners, youth activists, and the community in urban Dhaka and Cox's Bazar. The campaign featured **32 video messages** from SRHR professionals, experts, and activists on Facebook. Ipas Bangladesh and its partners observed the campaign through a national event organized by the CSO forum, co-convened with AdSEARCH by icddr,b. At the community level, the Improving SRHR in Dhaka project engaged 630 adolescents through 10 school campaigns. In Cox's Bazar, Ipas Bangladesh and partners organized three rallies in Rohingya camps with 300 participants and two discussions with Majhi and health service providers working on SGBV. Ipas also participated in a fair organized by GBV Sub Sector, UNFPA, at Cox's Bazar, showcasing SBCC materials and joining the collaborative rally.

Challenging discriminatory laws, policies, and practices in collaboration with CSO Forum



During the event

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Echoing with the theme 'UNITE to End Gender-Based Violence', the CSO Forum for Strengthening Sustainable SRHR Ecosystem in Bangladesh marked the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2024 through a joint event in collaboration with Adsearch by icddr,b, supported by Global Affairs Canada and Ipas Global. Ipas Bangladesh, as the convener of CSO Forum along with its co-conveners OGSB and BLAST, highlighted the forum's role in advancing women's rights, empowerment, and gender equality in Bangladesh. Representatives of CSO forum's 21 member organizations, government stakeholders, development partners, and human and women rights activists expressed solidarity to the pledge to promote women rights and empowerment, and gender equality in Bangladesh context and took a collective oath to strengthen the collaborative efforts to commitment to be united to end gender-based violence.

The plenary session on 'Two Finger Test (TFT): An Unscientific, Unethical, and Unreliable Method in Proving Rape' moderated by Dr. Ruchira Tabassum Naved from icddr,b, was amongst the high spot of the event. The session focused on the 'Discriminatory laws, Policies, and Practices' and the implementation of the TFT ban by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, with support from women's rights organizations and the legal sector.

Community Photovoice Exhibitions Spark Dialogue on SRHR Issues

The Improving SRHR in Dhaka Project organized two interactive Community Photovoice Exhibitions—one at low socio-economic areas of Mohammadpur and another in Bongshal's Muslim Colony, Dhaka in December 2024. Led by youth volunteers, these open space exhibitions used storytelling to engage community members, fostering discussions on early marriage, gender-based violence, and unintended pregnancies. Participants connected the stories to their lived experiences, sharing insights and solutions to address these critical issues. The events strengthened community awareness and inspired collective action for positive change.



The local community is engaging with the Photo Voice exhibition

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

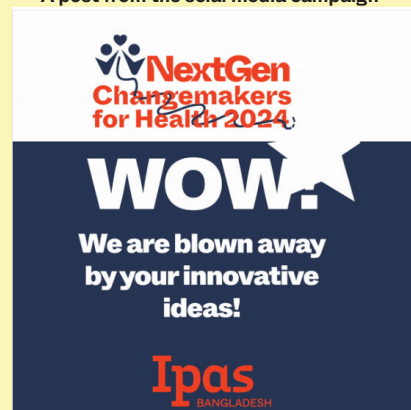
Photovoice is a participatory method that empowers individuals to capture and share their lived realities through photography, sparking dialogue and driving community-led solutions.

Youth Innovate for Climate Resilient SRHR

Climate change severely affects SRHR, as rising temperatures and extreme weather events disrupt healthcare access, making it particularly difficult for women and girls to receive essential services. To address this urgent issue from a youth perspective, the NextGen Changemakers for Health 2024 campaign was launched, empowering graduate and undergraduate students in Bangladesh to propose innovative, climate-resilient SRHR solutions through an Idea Contest.

Starting in October 2024, participants submitted 5-minute video pitches, leading to a competitive shortlisting in November, where 12 teams advanced with refined 10-minute proposals. By December, these teams had developed innovative ideas, proving that when the younger generation thinks critically about challenges, it strengthens the practice of sustainable solutions. Winners and finalists will be announced in February 2025.

A post from the social media campaign



45 Persons with Disabilities in Cox's Bazar Receive Essential SRH Services

119,691
client who
received SRHR services

45
women
with disabilities



Last year, 45 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Cox's Bazar received essential SRH services. This data was collected from 119,691 client responses, demonstrating the humanitarian program's extensive

reach and commitment to equitable healthcare access. For this data collection, service providers used the 'Washington Group Questionnaire-Short Set,' a globally recognized tool for identifying PWDs during service provision. Sixty-four service providers from Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar were equipped with this tool and began data collection through the Open Data Kit (ODK) mobile application.

This data, gathered in 2024, will help improve services for PWDs. By understanding their needs, future interventions can be made more inclusive and impactful, ensuring better care for everyone in the community.

Ipas Bangladesh Trains 50 Health Professionals to Facilitate CMRC Training

An image from the technical session of the training

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh



Under the leadership of the MCH Services unit of DGFP and the Maternal Health, MNC&AH Unit of DGHS, Ipas Bangladesh provided a Training of Trainers (ToT) on Comprehensive Menstrual Regulation Care (CMRC) to 50 participants from DGFP and DGHS as part of the National Scale-up Strategy. The training, held from November 9 to December 12, 2024, aimed to enhance participants' skills and knowledge to effectively deliver and evaluate CMRC training.

The participants included Medical Officers (MOs) and medical professionals from various regions and medical colleges across Bangladesh. These trained facilitators will mentor and lead future CMRC trainings, ensuring

accessible, stigma-free, and quality services at the facility level while supporting the national roll-out of the training. This project is funded by the Clinton Health Access Initiative.

In Search of Ways to Address Women's SRHR in Climate-Impacted Vulnerable Areas

Ipas Bangladesh has been in quest of digging into the sexual and reproductive health hazards that women and adolescent girls have been facing across the climate impacted cyclone, floods and drought prone areas and finding out sustainable and accessible interventions. In this connection Ipas Bangladesh has conducted participatory qualitative research covering Belkuchi of Sirajganj, Nikli of Kishoreganj and Slums of Dhaka city where the climate migrants live in collaboration with Naripokkho, one of the feminist organizations of

Bangladesh. A total of 22 Key Informants Interview (KII) were conducted from the three research areas covering local experts on climate change, community health workers, leaders of women and adolescent organisations.

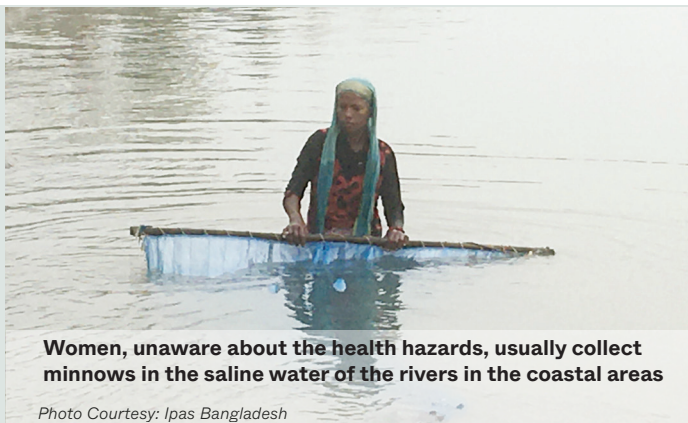
The first round of co-design workshops was conducted following User Centered Design (UCD) approach in the remotest Dacope upazila of Khulna district in the southern part of Bangladesh adjacent to the Sundarbans during 22-27 December 2024 to develop the intervention



During a co-design session at Loudob Union, Dacope Upazila, Khulna

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

packages for addressing SRHR of women and adolescent girls, where the organization conducted the earlier study. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has been formed for guiding the research and intervention development and the first TAG meeting was held on 17 December 2024 chaired Director, Climate Change and Health Promotion Unit (CCHPU), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) who attended the meeting online. The TAG members included participants from DGFP, DGHS, FCDO, UNFPA and Ipas Bangladesh.



Women, unaware about the health hazards, usually collect minnows in the saline water of the rivers in the coastal areas

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Our Impact for the October -December Quarter

At Ipas-supported health facilities-

6,7043 people
received Family Planning services

2,221 people
received Menstrual Regulation service

2,597 people
received Postabortion Care service

831 people
received support on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Through community engagement programs, Ipas Bangladesh reached-

127,604
Bangladeshi people

21,305
Rohingya people

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