

NEWSLETTER



A National Commitment to Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health

National Strategy and Costed Action Plan for Scale-up of Comprehensive Menstrual Regulation Care (CMRC)

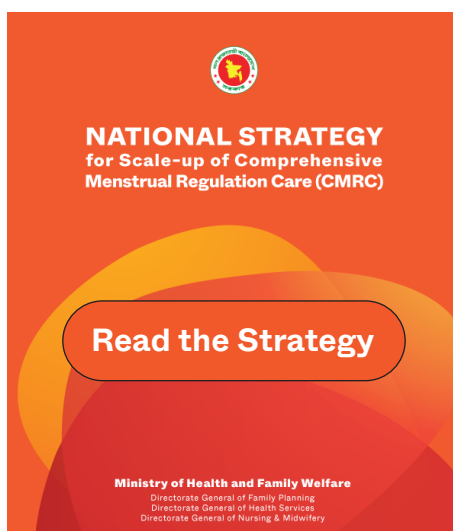
To strengthen the availability and accessibility of Menstrual Regulation (MR) services in order to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality caused by unsafe abortions, and to advance essential sexual and reproductive health services at a national level, the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) and the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), in collaboration with Ipas Bangladesh, organized a **Dissemination Event on 5 March 2025**. This event marked the **official launch of the National Strategy and Costed Action Plan for the Scale-up of Comprehensive Menstrual Regulation Care (CMRC)**.

Chaired by the Director General of DGFP and attended by the Additional Director General (Administration) of DGHS as a special guest, the event brought together senior officials from DGFP, DGHS, and DGME, along with representatives from

professional societies, development partners, SRHR-focused NGOs, and other key stakeholders.

Access to safe, high-quality MR services remains a critical public health, equity, and human rights issue in Bangladesh. While MR services have been provided free of charge through the government's family planning program, significant challenges persist in ensuring consistent accessibility, respectful care, and stigma-free service delivery, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Key messages from the event highlighted priority actions, including integrating MR, PAC, and post-abortion family planning into national programs, strengthening provider training and service quality, promoting high-quality, stigma-free, client-centered counseling, addressing contraceptive and logistics supply gaps, and improving use of MIS data to support evidence-based decision-making and strengthen program design and implementation.



Supporting Rohingya Women's Right to Informed Reproductive Choices

In Cox's Bazar's Rohingya camps, women are upholding their reproductive rights through the ARCHES community-based counselling initiative. The Addressing Reproductive Coercion in Health Settings (ARCHES) intervention is a counselling approach designed to address reproductive coercion (RC) and connect clients with available intimate partner violence (IPV) services.

RC and IPV remain major barriers for women in humanitarian settings. In this challenging context, the ARCHES model has proven effective in strengthening women's confidence and ability to make informed decisions about their reproductive health. The ARCHES model, implemented through

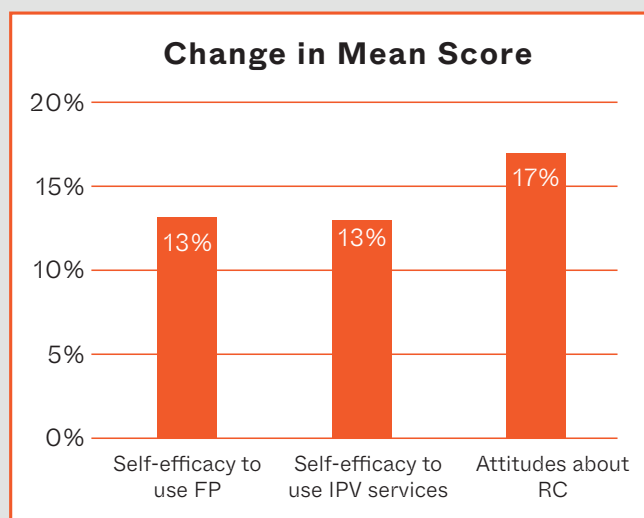
During the national-level dissemination held in Dhaka

Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh



Women-Friendly Spaces (WFSs), health facilities, and household outreach, proved feasible, cost-effective, and impactful, with Community Health Workers/ Volunteers expanding the intervention's reach. Evolving from a facility-based to an integrated community-facility model, ARCHES was co-designed with communities and the project (Sept 2023–Feb 2025) laid a strong foundation for scale-up.

ARCHES has also caught national and global attention. Findings were presented to the Bangladesh government, international donors, and at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum 2024 in South Africa. **At the national level, a dissemination meeting in Dhaka brought together around 75 stakeholders**, including senior officials from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, DGFP, and partners like FCDO, SIDA, GAC,



Amid crisis, displacement, and uncertainty, it's a quiet transformation of choice and self-efficacy

NGOs, and UN agencies. Stakeholders have recommended expanding ARCHES to all 34 camps in Cox's Bazar and even adapting it for host communities.

[See the Findings](#)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025

'Accelerate Action'

Ipas Bangladesh commemorated the International Women's Day 2025 with all staff of Ipas Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and Bhashanchar Office and project partners echoing with the global theme 'Together We Can Forge Women's Equality #AccelerateAction'. The team had a joint pledge to uphold women rights for accelerating action to reach women's equality. Also at the community level, five Health Camps were organized by Improving SRHR in Dhaka project at five localities to reach community people. Volunteers and General Practitioners (GPs) took part to provide information and services ensuring quality care fostering trust within the community.

For community engagement and support, GPs trained by the project facilitated community sessions on health rights, SRH, and modern family planning methods. Sessions were followed by open discussions that helped to break the taboo to discuss on sensitive health issues and focus on taking charge of health with equal emphasis to women like men. Around 293 community people including women and men attended the sessions, received information, and services.



Idea Contest on Youth-Driven Climate-Resilient SRHR Wraps Up



In response to the call for ideas on 'Climate-Resilient SRHR Solutions,' the NextGen Changemakers for Health 2024 campaign received strong interest and enthusiastic engagement from young people. After hundreds of university and medical college students from across Bangladesh submitted their 5 minute video pitches, 12 finalist teams advanced to develop comprehensive 10 minute proposals. From these 12, 10 made it to the final stage, with 1 winner and 3 runners-up selected.

The Winner team was EcoBloom Innovators from Dhaka Medical College. They proposed biodegradable menstrual pads from locally sourced banana and water-hyacinth fibers, offering affordable and eco-friendly solutions for women in flood and salinity-affected areas.

First Runner-Up was team Paal having members from International University of Scholars, Northern University Bangladesh, Govt. Titumir College. They conceptualized a women led disaster response initiative ensuring continued SRHR services in shelters during climate emergencies. Second Runner-Up was team Arcane from Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College. They presented a concept for affordable menstrual cups with installment payment options and community workshops to improve menstrual hygiene in saline prone regions. Third Runner-Up was team Octa-Core from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology. They envisioned a system mobilizing community health volunteers and telemedicine to maintain maternal health services in remote flood prone districts during disasters.

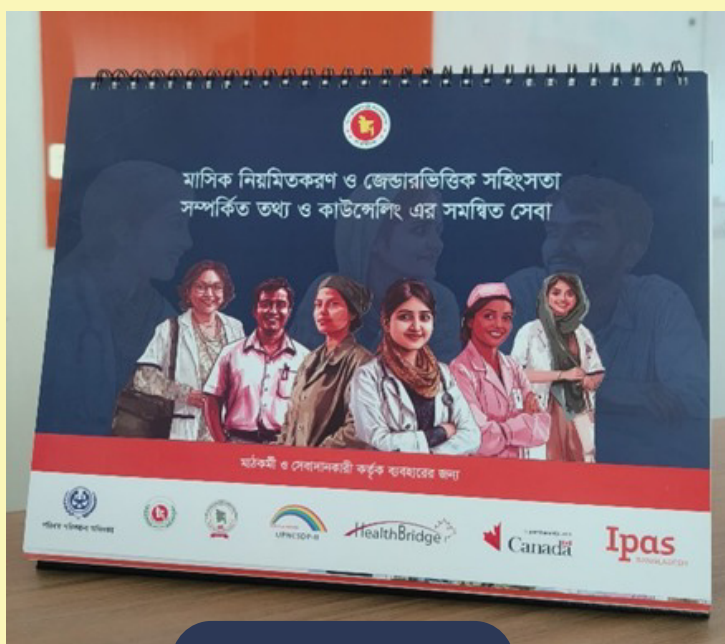
Through this campaign, Ipas Bangladesh engaged young groups, highlighting the urgent need for climate-resilient solutions and inspiring them to think critically about sustainable approaches. The award ceremony took place in February 2025, where the winner and runners-up were honored in the presence of key stakeholders, including leaders from the health and policy sectors.

MR-SGBV Counselling Flipchart Goes National

HIGHLIGHT Ipas Bangladesh has developed a nationally approved Comprehensive Information and Counseling Flipchart on Menstrual Regulation (MR) and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), endorsed by the IEC Technical Committee of the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP). Designed as a Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) tool, the flipchart equips service providers including doctors, nurses, midwives, SACMOs, FWVs, paramedics, and counselors to deliver accurate, stigma-free information during door-to-door visits, courtyard meetings, and clinic-based counseling sessions.

Covering key areas such as MR, Postabortion Care (PAC), SGBV, and post-MR family planning, the flipchart promotes interactive, client-centered communication. It addresses common misconceptions and supports informed decision-making among women of reproductive age. Developed collaboratively by Ipas's Health Systems, project teams and coordinated by the Community Access (CX) team, the tool was refined using pre-test feedback from both service providers and community members. The

Flipchart has been disseminated and now is in active use nationwide. It is expected that the flipchart will strengthen provider-client engagement, reducing stigma, and enhancing access to quality SRHR services across Bangladesh.



[See the Flipchart](#)

Trainers' Networking Workshop Bolsters SRH Expertise in Dhaka

NETWORKING To establish a robust network among trainers, and update them on the latest evidence and standards in Menstrual Regulation (MR), Postabortion Care (PAC), and Family Planning (FP) services Ipas Bangladesh hosted a two-day Trainers' Networking Workshop on 17-18 February 2025 at the Bengal Blueberry Hotel in Gulshan 2, Dhaka. Co-led by the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP), the event brought together 30 gynecology and obstetrics specialists from tertiary and secondary healthcare facilities alongside 7 DGFP officials..



The workshop aimed to establish a robust network among trainers, and update them on the latest evidence and standards in Menstrual Regulation (MR), Postabortion Care (PAC), and Family Planning (FP) services. Through interactive sessions, participants shared real-world experiences, explored innovative solutions, and addressed critical

challenges faced during training sessions and service delivery.

Highlights included in-depth sessions on current MR and PAC policies, global clinical recommendations, and guidelines. Notably, a comprehensive segment was dedicated to managing complications associated with second-trimester PAC procedures, providing participants with valuable clinical updates and practical strategies to enhance their competencies.

Participants valued the vibrant dialogue and interactive format, emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional collaboration. The workshop successfully fostered strong connections among healthcare trainers, creating a foundation for sustained knowledge exchange and continuous improvement in SRH service delivery.



Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Engaging Pharmacy Owners to Strengthen SRHR Service Quality



Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Every day, women in Dhaka visit local pharmacies for sexual and reproductive healthcare. Through the Improving SRHR in Dhaka (ISRHRD) project, a select network of those pharmacies hosts Ipas trained General Practitioners (GPs) who provide Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services. However, the quality of these critical services significantly depends on pharmacy owners' Infection Prevention (IP) and waste management practices.

Recognizing this crucial connection, ISRHRD project convened 27 pharmacy owners on 4 January 2025, for an interactive workshop to explore their pivotal role in maintaining service standards, ensuring not only the accessibility but also the quality of Menstrual Regulation (MR), Post-Abortion Care (PAC), and Family Planning (FP) services provided by the GPs. Participants reflected on how personal beliefs intersect with their professional

obligations, identified practical challenges, especially the absence of standardized waste disposal systems that jeopardize patient safety and community health.

In response, participants agreed on practical steps: partnering with urban medical waste management companies, cost-sharing strategies between pharmacies and GPs, joint management initiatives among neighboring pharmacies, and collaboration with local UPHCSDP clinics.

With renewed commitment, pharmacy owners left equipped not only with strategies but also a deeper sense of shared responsibility to uphold health standards, reinforcing the crucial role they play in safeguarding women's health in their communities.

Bridging awareness and action

Positive shift in the SRH service-seeking behavior of the Rohingya Community

AWARENESS

What happens when Rohingya individuals seeking marriage registration receive accurate information about sexual and reproductive health? They become empowered to make informed decisions about their health and lives. As part of Ipas-UNFPA's SBCC initiative, specialized SRHR awareness sessions are being conducted across 33 camps, specifically engaging the marriage registration-seeking Rohingya community. These targeted sessions



1,700
Rohingya people

actively participated
SRHR awareness sessions

male-847 and female-853

1,217
Rohingya people

visited health facilities for
SRH services

922
Rohingya people
received only counseling

295 Rohingya people
obtained family planning

From January 2024 to March 2025, a total of 81 awareness sessions were conducted at the CIC offices

are delivered in close collaboration with the respective Camp-in-Charge (CIC) offices and facilitated by trained Rohingya Imams (religious leaders), SBCC officers, and service providers. Participants of these awareness-raising sessions received comprehensive information on the available SRH services, mostly Family Planning (FP), Menstrual Regulation (MR), Post Abortion Care (PAC), Gender Based Violence (GBV), and other SRH services they can access from nearby health facilities in their respective camps.

Camp In-Charges, stakeholders, and the Rohingya community have welcomed the collaborative initiative, recognizing it as a step toward stronger community engagement and improved SRH outcomes, and fostering open conversations around reproductive health.

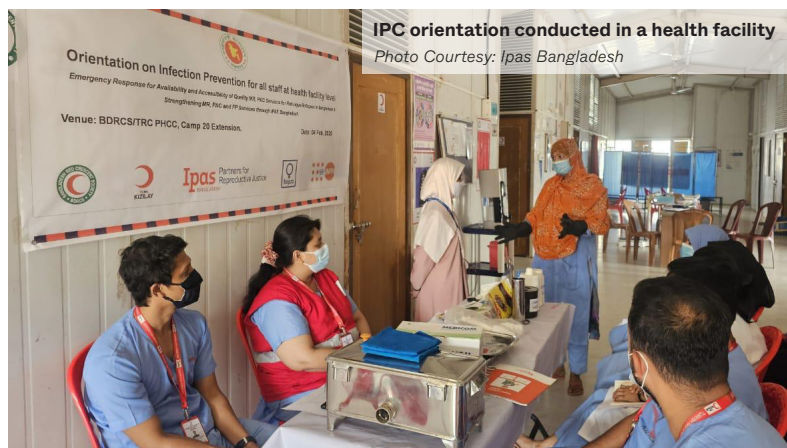
Strengthening Infection Prevention and Control at the Frontlines of Humanitarian Response

TRAINING

Between 30 January and 25 February 2025, Ipas Bangladesh, organized a series of infection prevention and control (IPC) orientation sessions under UNFPA supported Humanitarian Response Project. These sessions were held at ten different health facilities. A total of 231 facility staff (114 men and 117 women) including in-charges, caretakers, and cleaners from organizations such as Turkish Red Crescent, GK MI, IOM, Friendship, BDRCS, PHD, and government health services participated.

Guided by UNFPA and nominated through the SRH Working Group, Ipas identified target facilities, notified them of the IPC training schedule, and co-facilitated the sessions with the sexual and reproductive health working group (SRH-WG) quality improvement team. Each session delivered by an Ipas physician (trainer), blended theory (standard precautions, respiratory hygiene, sharps handling, linen and waste management, and environmental cleaning) with hands on practice (hand hygiene, autoclaving, boiling, instrument processing and storage techniques). Participants received IPC manuals, banners, flipcharts, and PPE kits to reinforce learning.

Despite balancing sessions with ongoing services, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Participants called for frequent refreshers and requested printed or digital IPC modules. One key insight was to schedule future training after service hours to avoid disruption. This initiative not only equipped frontline teams with essential IPC skills but also adopted a shared understanding among partners, ultimately strengthening the delivery of safe, quality SRH services in both refugee and host communities.



IPC orientation conducted in a health facility
Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh



During the practical session
Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Consultative Workshop Shapes GBV Survivor Referral Pathway



During the group work session
Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

The Improving SRHR in Dhaka (ISRHRD) project convened its third round of consultative workshop on 7 January 2025 with key government stakeholders from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. During the session, Ipas Bangladesh shared the draft outline of a referral pathway, and a policy brief designed to support GBV

survivors in urban settings.

In presence of around 70 participants including relevant government ministries and departments, along with non-government service providers and youth volunteers, the outline was reviewed the proposed pathway and collected feedback for a practical and survivor friendly pathway for piloting in the selected project supported facilities. Discussion focused on ways to ensure coordinated service delivery, prioritize survivor safety and confidentiality, and respect for individual choices in accessing support.



Photo Courtesy: Ipas Bangladesh

Our Impact for the January to March Quarter

At Ipas-supported health facilities-

68,074 people
received Family Planning services

2,061 people
received Menstrual Regulation service

2,731 people
received Postabortion Care service

819 people
received support on
Sexual and Gender Based Violence

Through community engagement programs, Ipas Bangladesh reached-

121,502
Bangladeshi people

19,023
Rohingya people



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