



Road to Equality for Women and Marginalized People

Bi-Annual Report

2022-2023

Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha

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for Women and Marginalized People

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Published in

June 2024

Published by

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ABBREVIATIONS:

AFWA	:	Asian Floor Wage Alliance
AWAM	:	Advancing Equality of Women and Marginalized People
BNPS	:	Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha
CEFM	:	Child, Early and Forced Marriage
CFRM	:	Complaint Feedback and Response Mechanism
CHT	:	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CSO	:	Civil Society Organization
CS	:	Civil Society
EMAP	:	Engaging Men in Accountable Practices
FDMN	:	Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals
GBV	:	Gender Based Violence
GNWP	:	Global Networks of Women Peacebuilders
IGA	:	Income Generating Activities
IPV	:	Intimate Partner Violence
MHM	:	Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management
MP	:	Member of Parliament
MPWC	:	Multi-Purpose Women Centre
NAP WPS	:	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
PRiME	:	Promoting Rights through Mobilization and Empowerment
PSEA	:	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
REE-CALL	:	Resilience through Economic Empowerment and Community Adaptation, Leadership and Learning
SAAPE	:	South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication
SRHR	:	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SHE	:	Strengthening Her Efficiency
VAW	:	Violence Against Women
VAW/G	:	Violence Against Women and Girls
WGSS	:	Women and Girls' Safe Space
WPS	:	Women, Peace and Security
WRO	:	Women Rights Organization

Message from the Executive Director

As we reflect on the past year 2022-2023, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I present the accomplishments of Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS). Our dedicated team has tirelessly worked to advance gender equality, women's empowerment, and the rights of marginalized communities. Through our work align with strategic plan, we have made significant strides in enhancing socio-economic conditions, promoting gender-sensitive education and budget, advocating for law and policy reforms, and fostering youth, community-based organization and civic engagement. Our ongoing efforts are driven by the unwavering commitment to creating a diverse and fair society, free from all sorts of discrimination and violence.

During this period, BNPS has demonstrated a comprehensive approach to women's empowerment and significantly improved their economic stability, participation in local governance. The impact of our work is evident in the 22.53% increase in income among beneficiaries and the proactive steps taken by women to resolve issues such as child marriages and gender-based violence. Those initiatives have not only empowered women economically but also fostered a sense of unity and discipline within the community, enhancing organizational effectiveness and civic participation. Women groups and community members are more capable to tackle climate change hazards and introduced alternative livelihood options through using their existing resources.

BNPS has demonstrated a comprehensive approach to women's empowerment. By providing 10054 women and youth with essential safety net services and income-generating skills and women's emancipation. We have focused on creating an enabling environment for women and girls in Dhaka, Chattogram, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Netrakona districts. During this period, our efforts have reached over 16,700 direct

beneficiaries and indirectly impacted more than 100,000 people, tackling issues such as sexual harassment, child marriage, and gender-based violence, increased participation of women in local government in traditional structures of Customary Laws in CHT. BNPS enhanced capacity to 12 local NGO's of CHT and Cox's Bazar involved about 12000 girls and 36000 family members through 300 girls' clubs of 61 unions under 17 upazila of 3 CHT districts. The girls are now capacitated in taking part in decision making discussions, identifying own priorities and advocate that to others.

In humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar, BNPS has provided safe spaces for over 11,000 women and girls to engage in educational and awareness sessions. 1,200 women and girls developed leadership skills, in which 140 mentoring and coaching abilities, 700 livelihood skills. And remaining number skilled in entrepreneurship development. 400 women started their own businesses. BNPS improved access to quality GBV prevention and response services, increased community awareness and provided essential GBV case management support. The initiative has also shifted societal norms, fostering a more supportive and equitable community.

BNPS is grateful for the support provided by development partners like Bread for the World, Misereor, WWDP, Simavi-EU, IRC, BILL & MELINDA GATES Foundation, Oxfam, UN Women. BNPS is also grateful for its strong partnerships with women right organizations, civil society, government authorities and non-government sectors. I am really thankful to our executive and general body members and staff members for their commitments towards empowering women and marginalized communities, and we look forward to continuing our work to build a just and inclusive society.

Rokeya Kabir
Executive Director

BNPS: Road to Equality since 1986

Since the 1990s, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS) has been dedicated to creating an enabling environment that foster values of harmony and absolute tolerance, with the ultimate goal of building a gender-equal society free from all forms of discrimination. At both the community and national levels, BNPS has supported women's organizations by forming various committees and networks, enhancing capacity, and developing leadership among local women, youth groups, and students. Through these efforts, BNPS has been able to identify the factors and forces that perpetuate discrimination within society and has played a proactive role in addressing and eliminating them.

BNPS has consistently worked toward gender sensitization across a wide range of institutions, including the media, trade unions, doctors' association, teachers' association, lawyers' association, political parties, and the police administration. This commitment has been central to the organization's mission since its inception. BNPS has also played a leading role in the formulation of key national policies and initiatives, such as the National Women Development Policy, the Gender Sensitive Budget, and the National

Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Additionally, BNPS has been instrumental in law and policy reform efforts aimed at preventing violence against women and advocating for the direct election of women in local government institutions.

BNPS's contributions extend to preserving the legacy of women freedom fighters in Bangladesh, ensuring their recognition on a national scale. In the education sector, BNPS has worked tirelessly to incorporate gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) curricula into textbooks. The organization has also conducted nationwide campaigns, which include identifying gender-insensitive components in madrasa curricula and conducting research to develop guidelines on effective teaching methods.

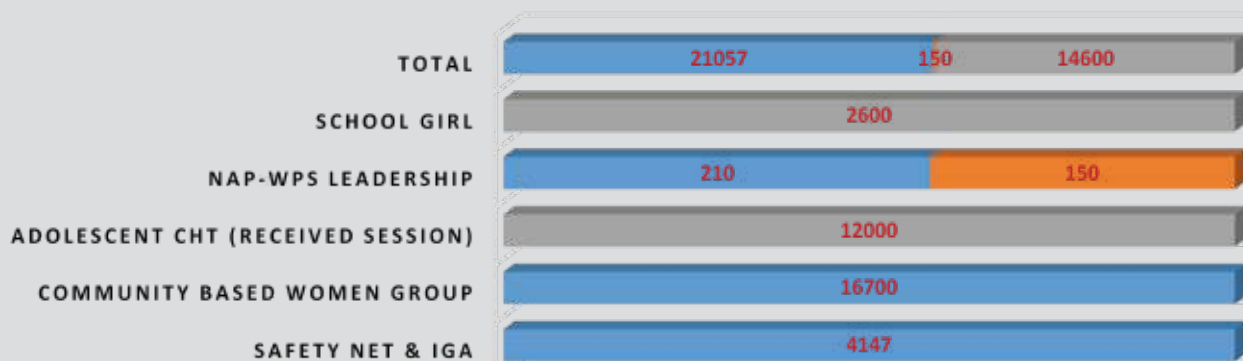
Beyond the local and national levels, BNPS has made significant contributions on the regional and international stages, further solidifying its role as a key advocate for gender equality and women's rights. Through its multifaceted approach and unwavering commitment, BNPS continues to shape a more just and equitable society, both within Bangladesh and beyond.

BNPS Vision	A society free from all sorts of discrimination, where nobody is left behind.
BNPS Mission	Engaging women to understand their potential and facilitate the process of being as change agent and driving force for social transformation.
Our Guiding Principles	We believe in the principles of non-discrimination, diversity and secularism.
Our Programs and Actions	Focus areas: ■ Developing women's agency, we aim at their socio-economic and political empowerment; ■ Making education gender sensitive, we aim at shaping generation's mindset; ■ Advocating and researching for policy reforms, we aim at women's emancipation, including ethnic and religious minorities; ■ Engaging in civic actions, we advance policy reforms and oppose tolerance to gender-based violence and violent extremism.

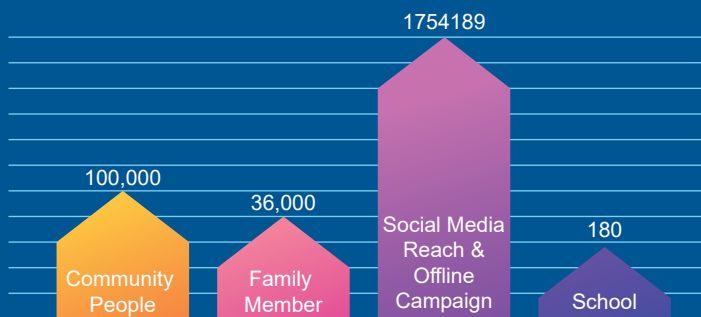
KEY STAKEHOLDER OF THE ORGANIZATION

DIRECT STAKEHOLDER

Women Men Adolescent & Youth

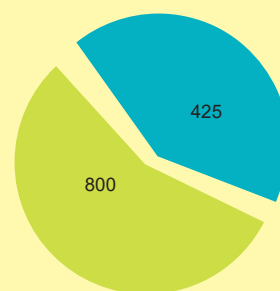


INDIRECT STAKE HOLDER



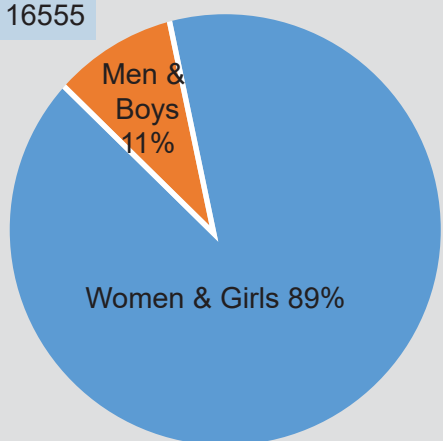
YOUTH STAKEHOLDER

University Community



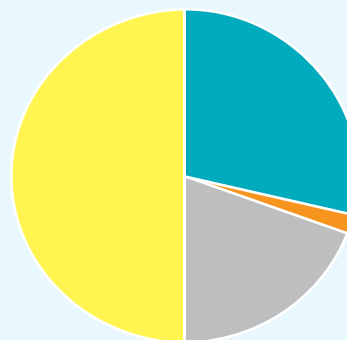
DIRECT STAKEHOLDER

Total : 16555



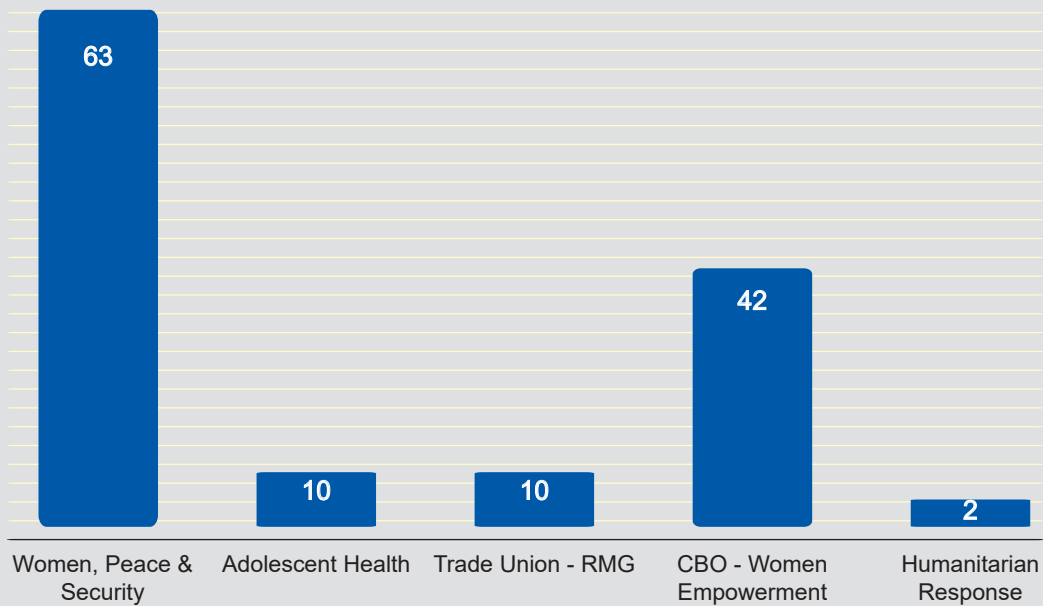
Women & Girls Men & Boys

Participant Types

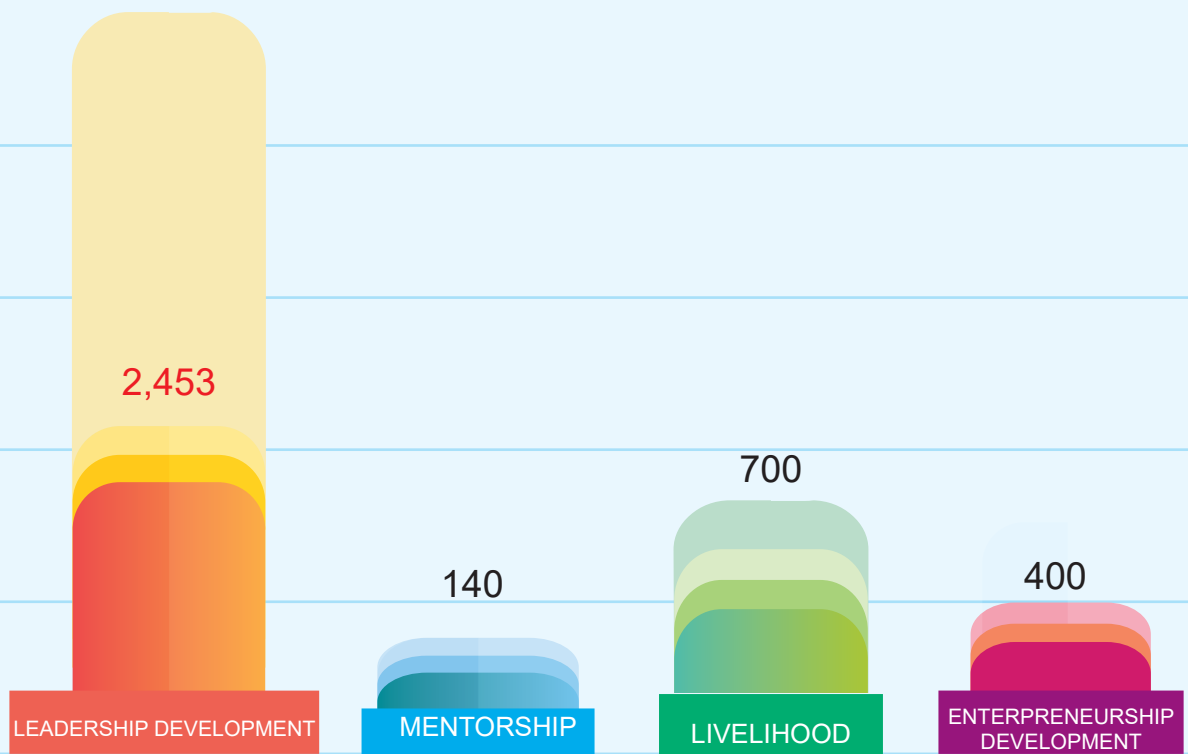


Community Influential/Leader
Religious Leader
Youth
Women

CSO Capacity Building



Capacity Building: Empowerment of Women



Advancing Equality of Women and Marginalized People (AWAM)

All-Inclusive Strategy for Gender Equality:

BNPS has made significant contributions to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment by supporting 3,929 women and youth, and referring them to vital safety net services. This initiative has upheld the rights and needs of women, ensuring their access to public resources and increasing their involvement in local governance.

Economic Empowerment: Through acquiring income-generating skills and gaining access to government connections, 1,071 members achieved a 22.53% income increase, enhancing their economic standing. As a result of strengthened unity and teamwork, 40% of women's groups independently advanced significant issues and improved their organizational performance.



Shahnaz Sumi, Director-BNPS speaking in the consultation meeting with journalists.

Advocacy and Civic Engagement: BNPS conducted lobby meetings with local government agencies, service providers, the media, and local authorities to promote gender equality and increase women's participation in public decision-making processes.

Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness:

BNPS identified and prepared 3,000 members at risk from climate change and disaster impacts, facilitating training on climate change for youth that promoted sustainability and resilience. The socio-economic standing of 720 members was improved by connecting them with microfinance organizations.

Active Participation in Governance: BNPS encouraged women group members to actively participate in annual planning sessions, leading to the joint identification and prioritization of women's issues.

Promoting Gender-Sensitive Leadership: Over the last two years, BNPS facilitated 1,600 awareness meetings for women's groups and 400 sessions for youth and adolescents, promoting social issues to create gender-sensitive leadership and education. Women addressed 52 child marriages, 27 cases of harassment, and 468 cases of torture, thereby strengthening civic action, promoting women's rights, and halting gender-based violence.

Empowerment Through Awareness: Positive changes in attitudes towards reducing violence against women and child marriage resulted from increased understanding of women's rights and awareness of discriminatory inheritance laws. Training sessions empowered adolescent girls and young people to collaborate with social groups and community leaders to combat child marriage and inaccurate marriage registration.

Promoting Gender-Sensitive Education: BNPS raised awareness among university students through sessions and set up school-level meetings to end violence against women. Improved service accessibility for youth group members, women's participation in local government committees, and the publication of articles in national newspapers led to policy reforms.

Overall, these outcomes demonstrate a substantial contribution to BNPS's strategic goals by empowering women economically, politically, and socially, promoting gender-sensitive education, advocating for policy reforms, and fostering civic engagement to build a diverse and just society free from discrimination.

Promoting Rights through Mobilization and Empowerment (PRiME)

In the reporting period, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS) has made significant strides in empowering women, reducing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), combating child marriage, and diversifying livelihood options across some of Bangladesh's most underserved regions. Our efforts have focused on creating an enabling environment for women, advocating for changes in national policies and customary laws that hinder women's emancipation, and ensuring that women have access to the resources and services they need to improve their socio-economic status.

Key Achievements: During this period, we witnessed a marked increase in leadership and entrepreneurship among community members, particularly women. These women have become more effective in responding to violence and have gained greater access to government services. One notable achievement was 42% increase of service recipients' number of social safety net



Professor Anupam Sen delivering his speech as Chair in the seminar on democracy and secularism for gender equality and equal citizenship.

Collaborations in CHT: BNPS has expanded its efforts to Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), where we have collaborated with three indigenous NGOs to challenge and change discriminatory customary laws. These efforts have enabled women to enter traditional leadership structures and advocate for marriage registration. Currently, 16 women hold the position of Headman, and 723 women serve as Karbari (village leaders). Through strategic partnerships and collaboration with women activist forums in CHT districts, BNPS has achieved significant progress in advocating for women's rights within customary institutions. A National Consultation Meeting on Importance of Introducing Marriage Registration in Customary Laws to Reduce Violence Against Women and Girls in Chittagong Hill Tracts was jointly organized by BNPS along with Progressive, AKS and KMKS on 12 June 2023 at the Ashika Hall Room, Rangamati where CHT Regional Council Chairman, Chakma Circle Chief, former

programs. Additionally, women who participated in our income-generating activities (IGA) training saw a 25% increase in their income, contributing to their economic empowerment.

In schools, BNPS's advocacy has led to more gender-sensitive environments, with authorities ensuring the availability of MHM friendly toilets and sanitary pads for girls. This progress reflects a broader commitment to making educational institutions safer and more supportive for female students.

Youth Engagement and Advocacy: Our youth engagement initiatives have also been impactful. A group of 200 youth activists has been instrumental in popularizing national helpline numbers among school students and community members. They have organized sports and cultural events aimed at preventing sexual harassment, child marriage, and GBV, further reinforcing the importance of youth involvement in these critical issues.

member of human rights commission and other prominent leaders attended. The honorable guests endorsed the importance of introducing marriage registration though still it is a debatable issue. They commented to discuss further with the concerned authorities in this regard to reach a decision. Headman and Karbari Association supported the efforts, but more remote areas require more initiatives.

Role of youth to promote values: In 2022, BNPS organized training sessions for selected students of University of Dhaka and Chittagong focusing on secularism, diversity, gender equality, and the role of youth in promoting these values. These sessions aimed to empower students to challenge traditional mindsets and become advocates for progressive change.

In collaboration with university leaders, BNPS organized five seminars titled "Secularism and Democratic Values for Gender Equality" at various universities, including the Dhaka, Jagannath, Chittagong, BRAC and Premier University, Chittagong. A total of 425 students participated in these seminars, which were designed to encourage responsible citizenship, prevent religious extremism, and promote the practice of secular and democratic values to advance gender equality. The seminars fostered discussions on how students could influence their peers, teachers, and family members to embrace and uphold these principles in their daily lives.

The Journey of Afroza Nargis: From Child Bride to Community Leader

Afroza Nargis's story is one of resilience, determination, and empowerment. Forced into child marriage with Wahab Mia in Malni, Netrakona, Nargis's early life was fraught with challenges and she continued her education, passing her BA exams. She became involved with BNPS and was elected president of a women's group. Nargis was appointed as a member of the Malni 21 cluster committee, leading community initiatives to address issues like abuse, child marriage, and sexual harassment. She also sought to empower herself economically by receiving training in sewing, block printing, batik, and Nakshikantha embroidery. She established her own sewing training center, providing training to over 400 women, and saved over BDT 3 lakh, a testament to her hard work and dedication. Nargis also registered a new organization, "Nahar Mahila Unnayan Sanstha," with the Department of Women's Affairs. Her story serves as an inspiration for others to follow in their journey of empowerment.



Afroza Nargis with some of her followers

Empowered Young Voices

Kamrun Nahar Muna, a student of University of Dhaka, participated in a three-day training session on secularism, gender equality, and youth roles at BNPS in December 2022. The training focused on diverse religious beliefs and the importance of respecting them without conflict, aligning with her academic background in world religion and culture. Muna appreciated the informative nature of the training and encouraged her friends to participate in BNPS's future events, which they found beneficial.

In May 2023, Muna attended a national seminar in Dhaka, where she learned about students spreading democratic and secular values for gender equality. She later sought BNPS's team for a comprehensive exploration of her subject related to BNPS's initiatives, highlighting its profound impact on her personal journey

"BNPS has been the catalyst for my transformative journey, shaping my advocacy for inclusivity and understanding. Through their insightful training and impactful events, I've learned that embracing diversity is the key to fostering genuine peace. United, we can amplify our voices for a world where everyone's beliefs are respected, and collaboration paves the way for true progress."

Kamrun Nahar Muna



Building capacity of women and key stakeholders to contribute to effective implementation of National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS)

From 2022 to 2023 BNPS, in collaboration with UN Women, implemented a comprehensive series of capacity-building and training programs aimed at empowering women leaders across various sectors, including community, religious, academic, women's groups, and civil society organizations. These initiatives were focused on strengthening the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS) in Bangladesh.



Localization workshop on NAP WPS held in Kushtia

Capacity Building and Training: A key component of this effort was the assessment and enhancement of the knowledge and skills of civil society organizations (CSOs) on the issues related to women's security and peace. Profiles of 57 CSOs from 10 districts were gathered, and their capacities were evaluated. To adapt to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, training modules were updated and modified accordingly. This included conducting comprehensive need assessments, capacity-building training, and organizing refresher sessions. Fifteen women's organizations successfully conducted these sessions at their respective locations, extending the reach and impact of the program.

BNPS also organized sensitization workshops in five working areas, engaging 150 women participants. These workshops provided in-depth knowledge of the participants' roles in advancing the objectives outlined in the NAP WPS. The active participation of youth groups and members of the Women Peace Café from four universities underscored a significant expansion of awareness and commitment to the WPS agenda, marking a positive trend for future advocacy efforts across the country.

Advocacy and Dialogue: In tandem with these training programs, BNPS facilitated 18 dialogues with women's groups, networks, and

government institutions. These dialogues were critical in enhancing Women's Protection Services (WPS) and promoting gender-sensitive prevention measures through the effective implementation of the NAP WPS in Bangladesh. A total of 360 stakeholders (216 women and 144 men), including government officials, civil society representatives, activists, journalists, police, and professionals, participated in these sessions. The dialogues focused on the key pillars of prevention, participation, and protection, fostering a collaborative approach to advancing gender equality and women's security.

BNPS organized a national dialogue on 26 July 2022 at CIRDAP Conference Hall in Dhaka, chaired by BNPS Executive Director Rokeya Kabir. The dialogue featured 105 participants from various organizations, including civil society, women's organizations, government officials, and journalists. Mr. Fazilatunnesa Indira, MP, Honorable Minister of State for Women and Children Affairs as the chief guest, and Mr. Masood Bin Momen, Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a special guest were attended in the dialogue. Ms. Dia Nanda, Deputy Country Representative of UN Women, and Ms. Nardia Simpson, Deputy High Commissioner of the Australian High Commission in Bangladesh were also attended as guests in the dialogue program.

Orientation on NAP WPS for MPs to Accelerate Localization of WPS Agenda



Mr. Jeremy Brewer, High Commissioner of Australia in Bangladesh, speaking at the orientation on NAP WPS for Members of Parliament to Accelerate Localization of Women, Peace and Security Agenda

BNPS organized an orientation event on National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security for members of parliament to accelerate localization of WPS agendas on 9 November 2022 at Bangabandhu Conference Hall in Dhaka, where Speaker of the National Parliament Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury was present as the Chief Guest. Parliamentarians including Mir Mostaq Ahmed MP, Sabnam Jahan MP, Aroma Dutta MP, Selima Ahmad MP, Syeda Rubina Akhter MP, Kazi Kaniz Sultana MP, and Monira Sultana MP were present in the orientation session. Bradley Coates, Counselor (Political) of the Canada High Commission in Bangladesh, Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative of UN Women in Bangladesh, and Jeremy Brewer, Australian High Commissioner in Bangladesh spoke as honorable guests in the event.

Throughout the course of the program, BNPS has established itself as a leading authority on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) concept, the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP WPS), and its implementation and monitoring mechanisms. By actively engaging with women-led organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media, and other key stakeholders, BNPS has not only positioned itself as an expert but also as a facilitating organization. In this capacity, BNPS has played a crucial role in building the capabilities of both CSOs and government officials, ensuring a more effective and comprehensive approach to advancing the WPS agenda in Bangladesh.

“This action plan (NAP WPS) can play a vital role in preventing violence against women, combating the adverse effects of climate change and disasters on women, addressing the post-Covid mental and financial challenges of women, and protecting women's peace and security as a whole.”

Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Honorable Speaker, Bangladesh National Parliament

Empowering Bangladeshi Women to Contribute to Sustainable Peace

BNPS entered into a formal partnership agreement with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) to jointly implement the project titled "Empowering Rohingya Refugees, Burmese, and Bangladeshi Women to Contribute to Sustainable Peace" from October 2021 to June 2022. This initiative, conducted through GNWP's Young Women Leaders for Peace (YWL) Program, focused on empowering young women and Rohingya women and girls in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, BNPS successfully organized three virtual consultations with national and local women's civil society organizations, UN Women, humanitarian actors, and the national government. BNPS played a key role in developing the agendas for local-level workshops on NAP WPS, which took place on December 12th and 13th, 2021, at Hotel Jol Tarongo, Army Welfare Trust Rest House in Cox's Bazar. Additionally, BNPS facilitated a national-level workshop on June 21, 2022, at the Spectra Convention Centre in Gulshan, Dhaka. This workshop focused on ensuring the effective implementation of the NAP WPS in the context of the refugee crisis in Bangladesh.

The workshop featured prominent speakers, including Rokeya Kabir, Executive Director of BNPS; Lilly Nicholls, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh; H.E. Ambassador Nathalie Chuard, Embassy of Switzerland; Diya



Rokeya Kabir delivering her speech in the national workshop on ensuring effective implementation of Bangladesh's NAP WPS in the context of the Rohingya crisis

Nanda, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Bangladesh; and Mavic Cabrera Balleza, CEO and Founder of GNWP. The event was attended by women leaders, civil society organizations, government officials, humanitarian actors, local authorities in Bangladesh, representatives of the UN and diplomatic community, and key stakeholders and experts from Nepal and the Philippines. Participants actively engaged in the day-long event, sharing their views, concerns, and experiences on the critical issues discussed.

BNPS initiated a media campaign to highlight the crucial contributions of women and the significant role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in implementing NAP WPS. As part of this campaign, BNPS developed digital posters and event-based video clips in Bangla. These materials were uploaded and promoted via BNPS Facebook page titled নারী, শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তা. As of June 30, 2022, the campaign effectively reached 354,944 audiences through the digital posters and 345,277 audiences through the video clips, according to the Facebook page analytics.



Ensuring fair wages, creating a safe environment, and eliminating gender-based violence for garment workers



A rally of Women Committee, Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) Bangladesh during International Women's Day 2022

BNPS is dedicated to improve the quality of life for garment workers in Bangladesh through its research project on the impact of COVID-19 on the garment industry. The key strategies of this program include collaboration with trade unions to ensure fair wages and developing partnerships with the Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) Bangladesh, which comprises five affiliated federations.

BNPS plays a pivotal role in creating a safe working environment and empowering women through the involvement of a women's committee from AFWA. This committee actively participates in project activities, focusing on gender-specific issues and addressing gender-based violence and harassment.

The organization has contributed significantly to the National Committee of AFWA, which oversees the alliance's strategic direction. The National Committee, composed of ten members, provides governance and oversight, while the Women's Committee, including 20 women leaders, focuses on gender issues and the elimination of gender-based violence.

During the reporting period, unified garment worker unions presented a consolidated wage demand, reflecting increased awareness among workers and organizations regarding their rights and wage issues. This heightened awareness has strengthened their capacity to advocate for a safe working environment and the elimination of gender-based violence, supported by the formation of strong National and Women's Committees within AFWA.

Over the past two years, BNPS has implemented "The Safe Circle Approach," which includes training of trainers (ToT), establishing Safe Circle Committees in garment factories, and providing awareness sessions to combat gender-based violence. Additionally, BNPS conducted a living expenses survey for garment workers and documented incidents of gender-based harassment and violence within factories. Two roundtable discussions were organized at the National Press Club with representatives from unions, academia, and NGOs to unify efforts in establishing a dignified minimum wage for garment workers in Bangladesh.



Number of Trade Union: 10

RMG Covered: 300 +

Number of Districts: Dhaka, & Gazipur

BNPS-conducted surveys on the cost of living for garment workers in 2022 and 2023 provided valuable insights into their minimum living expenses, aiding in the establishment of an appropriate minimum wage for a healthy life. Furthermore, BNPS explored the causes, scope, and

factors related to gender-based violence and harassment experienced by women workers in garment factories.

These activities are designed to ensure women's economic empowerment and skills development by addressing and eliminating gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination. BNPS's efforts aim to amplify the voices of grassroots women at both national and international levels, fostering their leadership and equipping them with the skills needed to drive change and advocate for their rights effectively. Through these initiatives, BNPS is committed to creating a more just and equitable society where women can thrive, directly contribute to the organization's overarching mission of gender equality and social justice.

Transforming Lives through Women's Leadership in Bangladesh's Garment Industry



Participants of Training of Trainers on Safe Circle method

Bangladesh's garment industry has witnessed a profound transformation, driven by a coalition of ten federations and a dedicated Women's Leadership Committee. Comprising 20 resolute members from regions such as Dhaka, Savar, Kaliakair, Ashulia, Gazipur, and Chittagong, this committee has been at the forefront of addressing gender-based violence, conducting cost of living surveys, calculating living wages, and leading awareness campaigns since 2022. Despite facing challenges like low wages and inadequate maternity benefits, the women leaders have forged a trade union to advocate for their rights. Their efforts have led to improved working conditions, reduced workplace harassment, and improved safety standards. Their initiatives have established support systems for workers facing legal and financial challenges, and their active role in the union has led to successful wage negotiations and increased membership.

The women leaders are now focusing on expanding training programs and creating more leadership opportunities within the union, aiming to create a garment industry where workers are treated with dignity and respect. As one of the leaders stated, "To all women out there, never doubt your strength. Together, we can overcome any challenge. Stand up, speak out, and lead the change you wish to see in the world. Your voice matters."

This success story underscores the transformative power of women's leadership in the garment industry, illustrating their significant achievements in advocating for workers' rights and their unwavering commitment to building a fairer, more just society.

Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence against Women and Girls (CS)

BNPS has implemented the project since 2016 in the Haor region of three sub-districts: Sadar, Barhatta, and Mohanganj of Netrakona district. BNPS initiated to implement the project in this undeveloped and GBV-prone area to improve women's rights and VAW situation.

BNPS had taken various awareness, campaign, and capacity-building programs to change the patriarchal attitude and raise a strong voice by the youths and women leaders as change agents reducing GBV. To express strong concern to stop any kind of unexpected behavior against women, sexual harassment, stopping child marriage, and pursue effective legal measures that were supportive to the victim women and girls. Also, young boys and male members were the key driving forces to advocating and creating role models.

BNPS had contributed to achieving the following results through this project:

- 484 women and girls received leadership training focused on preventing Violence against Women (VAWG).
- 299 individuals, including 80 religious leaders, political figures, and civil society members, were trained as change agents to increase knowledge, attitudes, and practices in eliminating VAWG and Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM).
- Successfully prevented 16 cases of CEFM and 6 cases of VAWG.
- Strengthened formal and informal accountability mechanisms involving marriage registrars, local elected bodies, local administration, social elites, and influencers. 160 influencers are actively involved in preventing CEFM and gender-based violence (GBV).
- 550 women and girls were trained and empowered to advocate for their rights, specifically in preventing VAWG and CEFM.
- 60 local community group members (40 women and 20 men) received training on leadership and human rights for effective local accountability.
- 200 youth are actively engaged in the community to eliminate VAWG and CEFM.
- Developed informational resources on gender and human rights to enhance leadership, reduce gender discrimination, and promote human rights among youth and community members.
- 48 GBV cases were provided with quality services through Union Parishad, the National Legal Aid Committee, hospitals, the Upazila Women Affairs office, and police stations.
- 143 women and girls received training on entrepreneurship development and market linkage through the Upazila Women Affairs office, the Upazila Youth Development office, and mentors.
- 150 women and girls were trained in accessing public services, including health, law enforcement, and legal aid.
- 75 women and girls received business start-up support from the Youth Development Office for income-generating activities, with grants totaling 40,000 BDT.
- Produced and distributed Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials in schools, colleges, local government council offices, GO/NGO offices, mosques, temples, and local markets.
- Provided support to VAWG/CEFM victims to enhance their capacity to access economic and livelihood opportunities.



Resilience through Economic Empowerment, Climate Adaptation, Leadership and Learning (REECALL 2021)

BNPS has been implementing the project since 2010 to address water, work, women, and inequality in the Mohanganj Upazila of Netrakona District. The project, funded by Oxfam, has focused on reducing extreme poverty, addressing climate change impacts, and preventing violence against women.

BNPS facilitated 4,987 households in reducing extreme poverty, addressing the impacts of climate change, and preventing violence against women, all through a community-based approach. As BNPS implements the final phase of REE-CALL in 2021, it introduces new thematic areas, including scaling up CBOs, promoting economic justice, and empowering women.

BNPS has also developed models and initiatives under its resilient WASH component, focusing on water, sanitation, and hygiene. The introduction of adaptive and diversified livelihood options has significantly increased the economic empowerment of vulnerable women and men in the project areas. However, challenges remain, such as accessing safe water and sanitation.

BNPS has facilitated the construction of Mini Water Pipeline Systems, Arsenic-Iron Removal Units, Sanitation Centers, and Mini Sanitation Systems in villages. Throughout this phase, BNPS has also established a CBO alliance, with a strong emphasis on youth engagement and active citizenship that are playing a leading role in advocating for the rights and entitlements of marginalized people in the Haor region. They have developed their own annual development plans, driving progress toward solving their own challenges and improving their communities.

BNPS had contributed to achieving the following results through this project:

Income-Generating Activities (IGA): Eleven CBOs (Rampasha, Bolodorshi, Putiuga, Borobetham, Kurerpar, Madhupur, Ghorautra, Siadhar, Korachapur, Chanpur, and Chowrapara) have successfully implemented income-generating activities through self-financing. These CBOs have collectively disbursed loans totaling BDT 1,165,000 (Eleven Lakh Sixty-Five Thousand Taka) to 115 of their members.

Financial Management: 80% of training participants have enhanced their skills in managing CBO savings and food banks. Cashiers and secretaries are now maintaining passbooks, savings books, and registers more effectively.

Bank Communications: 60% of CBO leaders, including Monosha, Rita, Bhulona, Sabina, Suhita, Shipra, Chandnagar, Amena, Moushumi, Shahana, Toltol Rani, and Parvin, are actively engaging with Pubali Bank and other financial institutions to access loan services.

Loan Acquisition: Members Shusen, Namita, Gayandas, Tarikul, Sabuj Fakir, and Tamanna have secured loans ranging from BDT 5,000 to BDT 10,000 from the Upazila Livestock Office.

Savings Growth: A total of 36 CBO members have collectively saved approximately BDT 2,300,000 (Twenty-Three Lakh Taka) in Pubali Bank, Mohanganj.

CSF Fund Utilization: Through the CSF fund provided by the REE-CALL project, CBOs have disbursed loans totaling BDT 900,000 (Nine Lakh Taka) to 100 women from 10 CBOs.

Empowering Women and Transforming Communities: The Story of Sabina Akter and the REECALL 2021.

Sabina Akter, a member of a Community-Based Organization (CBO) in Mohanganj, Netrakona, participated in the REECALL 2021 project, which empowered her and other members to establish food banks and save money collectively. The CBO was registered with the Somobai Department (Registration No. 100), allowing them to operate more formally and effectively. With a fund of BDT 3 lakh, the CBO provided loans to members, enabling them to start income-generating activities like duck farming, cow farming, poultry farming, small businesses, tailoring, and agricultural work. The project also helped women form networks, access markets, and secure better prices for their products. Sabina took on leadership roles, holding a position on the executive committee within the CBO, and many other women in the community also took a key position of government committees like the Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) and the School



Management Committee (SMC). The story of Sabina Akter and the REECALL 2021 project is a powerful testament to the impact of community-driven initiatives. By empowering women and fostering a spirit of collaboration and self-reliance, the project has not only transformed individual lives but has also strengthened the entire community, laying the foundation for a brighter, more sustainable future.

Mini Water Pipeline Brings Relief to Women's Lives in Gorautra Village.



The women in Gorautra village, located in Mohanganj Upazila of Netrakona District, face daily challenges in accessing safe water due to contaminated sources. The REECALL 2021 project, a collaboration between BNPS and Oxfam Bangladesh, aims to address the issue by installing a mini water pipeline in the village. The 3,000-liter

water tank provides a steady supply of clean water, and a seven-member WASH management committee oversees the systems maintenance and collection. The project cost BDT 365,500, but the investment has transformed the lives of 33 families, providing them with safe drinking water. CBO members like Fatema, Morsheda, Shikha, Begum, and Amena expressed their relief and gratitude: "Now we are drinking safe water with pleasure. We are using this water for all purposes, and we no longer have to go far for collecting water. The hardships are getting less, time is being saved, and our family members are also helping us. We women are benefiting the most."

The women in Gorautra village are now able to enjoy safe water, save time, and benefit from the support of their family members. The mini water pipeline has brought peace to their lives and has led to a healthier future.

Empowering adolescent girls and young women in Chittagong Hill Tracts to live with dignity and without violence

BNPS successfully concluded the implementation of “Our Lives, Our Health, Our Futures” (OLHF) project on December 31, 2023. This project, funded by the European Union and supported by Simavi Netherlands, involved collaboration with ten local partner organizations, significantly expanding the scope for future initiatives.

Throughout the project, BNPS and its ten partners enhanced their capacities in project management, financial oversight, administrative operations, and gender mainstreaming. The project was executed across 61 unions in 17 Upazilas within three districts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Engaging a total of 12,000 young women and girls through 300 girls' clubs, the project successfully increased their awareness, skills, and knowledge in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), menstrual health management (MHM), and gender-based violence (GBV). Moreover, it empowered these young women with enhanced decision-making abilities and greater participation in their communities.

Significant achievements of OLHF project during the 2022-2023 period include:



Training and Empowerment: 12,000 adolescent girls and young women were trained in making low-cost, handmade reusable sanitary pads. They are now producing and using these pads independently. The project also facilitated their involvement in creative expression, including drama, dance, song, painting, murals, video documentation, and community-level demonstrations, to spotlight essential issues such as early marriage, gender equality, GBV, SRHR, MHM, girls' education, and environmental concerns.

Advocacy and Awareness: The girls developed 842 advocacy messages addressing critical issues. Their performances at the 'National SRHR Conference and Youth Fair 2023' in Dhaka were a testament to their enhanced skills and capacity, garnering significant national attention.

Community Engagement: Approximately 36,000 community members, including fathers, mothers, brothers, traditional leaders, and local influencers, participated in awareness sessions. These sessions

aimed to support adolescent and women's priority issues at the community level.

Capacity Building in Healthcare: Medical Officers, Deputy Assistant Community Medical Officers, Health Assistants, Family Welfare Assistants, Family Welfare Inspectors, and Community Health Care Providers in the project area received orientation on Youth and Adolescent Friendly Health Care. Additionally, around 100 Gender Focal Persons in the three hill districts were trained on preventing violence against women and providing local services.

Conferences: BNPS organized a two-day conference on sexual and reproductive health and rights at the divisional level in Chittagong and Dhaka. The event featured 11 stall exhibitions and included participation from MPs, university teachers, divisional and district health officials, civil society representatives, and media personnel.

The OLHF project has made a substantial impact by advancing the health, rights, and empowerment of young women and girls in CHT, laying a solid foundation for future initiatives.



Inaugural session of the National SRHR Conference and Youth Fair 2023

The National SRHR Conference marked good national exposure for the project. Relevant government officials, academicians, Embassy representatives, UN agency representatives, national and international NGO representatives, journalists, civil society representatives, BNPS, Simavi & partner staff members, female mentors, and girls' club members participated in the conference.

Dr. Syed Modasser Ali, Chairman, Community Based Health Care (CBHC) and Chairman, Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) Trust, was present as the Chief Guest, and Enrico LORENZON, First Secretary, Team Leader, Inclusive Governance, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, and Mushfiqua Zaman Satiar, Senior

Policy Advisor, Social Sector, Focal Point for SRHR, Gender, and Youth, EKN, were present as the special guests in the opening session.

There were 5 thematic sessions: Adolescent/Youth Friendly Health Services; Health Services in Hard-to-Reach Areas, especially in CHT; Menstrual Health & Hygiene for Adolescent Girls, especially at School; Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), especially stopping IPV/DV and stopping child marriage in CHT; SRHR, Water & Climate Change: Challenges and Scopes in CHT.

The national conference declared 17-point demand to ensure adolescent health and adolescent SRHR addressing the impacts of climate change.

"Menstruation is my pride, and we will walk confidently, as fast as the speed of light, moving forward"

Matu Marma, an 18-year-old girl from Dewan Para, Guimara Sadar Union of Guimara Upazila, under Khagrachari district, is a member of the OLHF girls club. She began menstruation in eighth grade and was unaware of using pads. The project has boosted her confidence and critical thinking. She learned from a mentor and attended the initial familiarization session. She received the training on making reusable sanitary pads, which has significantly impacted her health and comfort. She now uses four reusable pads monthly. She expressed her experience that these pads can be easily burned after use and reused after cleaning. Now she is free from the fear of stains, which does not hinder smooth movement. She has shared her experience with her family, believing it will



contribute to future financial prosperity. The OLHF project has influenced her thoughts and provided valuable training, guiding her towards a healthier and more beautiful life.

Learning Spaces for Women's Humanitarian Leadership (LHL) Development

BNPS has successfully partnered with Oxfam BD to advance women's rights and support the Bangladesh Women in Humanitarian Platform (BWHP). This collaboration has adopted a feminist approach to ensure gender equality and address the historical inequalities faced by women. BNPS has played a crucial role in creating inclusive spaces where marginalized voices are heard and integrated into decision-making processes.

Through proactive outreach and engagement, BNPS has facilitated capacity-building for 15 women's rights organizations, which include local women, community groups, national women leaders, Rohingya and host community women, as

well as Upazila-level CSOs and local government members. These efforts have been achieved through targeted interventions such as mentorship programs, exposure visits, and learning-sharing activities.

Notably, a total of 55 community women have actively shared their knowledge and coping strategies for managing crisis and disaster situations, demonstrating the tangible impact of this initiative. BNPS's partnership with Oxfam BD has thus significantly enhanced gender-sensitive humanitarian responses and strengthened the overall capacity of women's rights organizations in Bangladesh.



Leaders of Women Rights Organizations (WROs) in the National Convention Workshop

The National Convention Workshop on the 21st and 22nd of March 2023 at ALOK, MJF, Dhaka, was a remarkable initiative, aimed to address the challenges faced by women in the humanitarian sector. The two-day event involved stakeholders from NGOs, donor agencies, government officials, and experts. Key issues discussed included lack of skills, communication barriers, and lack of long-term donor agencies. Strategies included lobbying, consistent fund applications, increased communication, and shelter homes for women. The convention also emphasized the need for change in patriarchal mindset, community mobilization, social capital development, and gender equality considerations in program development.

Participants' commitment to executing the women's leadership will undoubtedly pave the way for a brighter future for women in Bangladesh.

Strengthening Her Efficiency (SHE)

From January 2021 to December 2022, BNPS implemented a project in two Upazilas of Mymensingh district across 10 secondary schools, aimed at encouraging girl students to actively participate in extracurricular activities and sports, assume leadership roles in student cabinets, and advocate for a gender-friendly school environment.

Key Achievements:

1. Transformation in Gender Perceptions: The project has led to a notable shift in the local perception of girls participating in sports. Gender bias has increasingly been replaced with a gender-inclusive attitude across most schools. Teachers, school management committee members, and male students are now more supportive of girls' participation in sports, resulting in enhanced engagement and achievement in these activities.



Girls involved with the project exercising martial arts at school premise

2. Increased Participation and Recognition:

Sports Engagement: 2,600 girl students participated in sports programs, including activities such as throwing events, sprints, and rope skipping. This increased participation not only boosted their confidence but also empowered them.

Self-Defense Training: 200 girls received self-defense training, with a group of 20 trained girls subsequently mobilizing and encouraging other students to learn these techniques. This initiative has fostered a culture of self-protection and confidence.

3. Leadership and Advocacy:

Student Leadership: School cabinet members have taken a proactive role in organizing sports programs and self-defense training for their

peers, contributing to a more supportive and inclusive school environment.

Dialogue and Collaboration: The project facilitated dialogues with school cabinet members, School Management Committees (SMCs), parents, community leaders, government officials, and media personnel to garner support for a gender-friendly school environment.

4. Impact on School Environment:

Reduction in Harassment: The project contributed to a reduction in sexual harassment and violence against girls within the project area. Self-defense classes and a gender-inclusive atmosphere have positively influenced attitudes, leading to a decrease in such incidents.

MHM-Friendly Environment: Improvements in menstrual health management (MHM) facilities have further encouraged girls' participation in school activities.

5. Training and Awareness:

Self-Defense Impact: Training in self-defense has empowered female students to speak out against harassment and violence. For example, Nusrat Jahan Urmi, a ninth-grade student, reported newfound courage to protest against abuse following her self-defense training.

Student Cabinet Engagement: A total of 457 participants attended 20 half-yearly student cabinet meetings, focusing on addressing harassment and violence in schools and communities. Strategies for preventing violence were actively discussed and adopted.

6. Official Endorsement:

District Academic Supervisor Ms. Shahana Akhtar noted that the student cabinets in the 10 schools are functioning in accordance with government regulations. These cabinets, in



conjunction with the School Sexual Harassment Prevention Committee, have held awareness sessions and discussions on preventing child marriage and abuse in and around schools.

BNPS project has made significant strides in fostering gender inclusivity, empowering girls, and improving school environments, setting a strong foundation for future initiatives in gender equality and student empowerment.

Annual Meeting Highlights: Addressing Bullying and Violence

Over the course of 10 annual meetings, a total of 515 participants, including 175 women and 340 men, engaged in discussions on bullying and violence. The attendees comprised teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, parents, and community leaders.

Key outcomes from these discussions include:

- **Improved School Environments:** Abul Mansoor, President of the SMC at Memorial Girls High School, reported a significant improvement in the school's environment. Previously, girls were victims of molestation on their way to and from school. Following these discussions, the incidence of bullying has been effectively addressed, resulting in a safer school environment.
- **Enhanced Parental Support:** Md. Hafizur Rahman, an SMC member at Gohailkandi High School, highlighted the positive impact of fostering a supportive and understanding relationship between parents and their daughters. This approach has led to more effective problem-solving and resolution of issues related to bullying and violence.

These meetings have played a crucial role in creating safer and more supportive school environments by addressing and mitigating instances of bullying and violence.

Humanitarian Response

Means to lead: Empowering Rohingya refugee and host community women through leadership, learning and livelihoods



Women fair during 16 days of activism in 2022 at MPWC

BNPS implemented a transformative project in the host communities of Cox's Bazar, focusing on enhancing women's and girls' access to resources and opportunities. This initiative sought to build individual and collective capacities through the practice of transformative leadership within a safe and enabling environment.

Following are some key achievements of the project:

1. Establishment of the Multi-Purpose Women Center (MPWC):

BNPS organized women from the host community and established a Multi-Purpose Women Center (MPWC) in Cox's Bazar Sadar. This center became a hub for training on gender, empowerment, and leadership development. It also provided women with opportunities to engage in income-generating activities and access essential services such as healthcare and legal assistance.

2. Training and Capacity Building:

The MPWC served as a safe space for over 11,000 women and girls from adjacent communities, offering awareness sessions, meetings, and group discussions on topics such as gender roles, power dynamics, access to information, SRHR, primary healthcare, and PSEA. During the reporting period, 1,200 women and girls received leadership training, and 140 were trained in mentoring and coaching. Additionally,

700 women and girls participated in livelihood training, with 400 successfully starting their own businesses.

3. Community Engagement and Support:

The project also engaged men and boys, with over 1,000 participating in awareness sessions designed to create a supportive environment for women. These sessions contributed to changing societal mindsets, fostering positive relationships between men and women, and promoting women's empowerment.

Impact and Contributions: The project significantly contributed to creating an enabling environment for women and girls, empowering them to become changemakers within their communities. Through livelihood activities, women gained economic independence, increased mobility, and challenged social restrictions on women's dignity. The initiative also helped to transform traditional gender norms in Cox's Bazar.

The MPWC provided not only essential services but also a space for women and girls to relax, reflect, and build their networks. The involvement of men in the project played a crucial role in shifting societal attitudes and fostering equal rights, thus supporting BNPS's strategic goals of gender equality and empowerment.

Delivering Health, Nutrition and Livelihood and Protection services to Rohingya Refugees and vulnerable host communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Since November 2021, BNPS has been implementing a critical project in Rohingya Camp-16, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, with technical support from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) under the BPRM program. This initiative focuses on creating a supportive environment for women through regular engagement with youth and men, providing them with awareness sessions and training on women's empowerment, leadership development, health safety, livelihood, security, and violence prevention for adolescents and caregivers.

Key Activities and Achievements:

1. Awareness Sessions and Training:

- BNPS conducted sessions for 126 participants, including 63 adolescent girls, 42 female caregivers, and 21 male caregivers. These sessions aimed to empower participants with knowledge and skills necessary for personal development and community engagement.
- The Engagement of Men in Accountable Practices (EMAP) sessions, conducted across eight groups comprising both male and female participants, reached a total of 471 individuals (236 men and 235 women). These sessions focused on increasing understanding of violence, planning for safety, and fostering the creation of an ideal community.

2. Community Outreach and Relationship Building:

- Through community outreach programs, BNPS reached 4,850 individuals (1,900 men and 2,950 women), significantly improving family relationships and fostering positive changes in male attitudes towards household responsibilities.
- Influential community leaders, including Majhi (Rohingya Refugee leaders), Imams (religious leaders), and other local leaders, have actively participated in the project, taking responsibility for societal change. A notable shift has been observed in the Rohingya community, with increased recognition of women's rights and support for girls' education.

3. Cultural and Social Impact:

- The project has had a profound impact on adolescent girls, who are now challenging social taboos and norms. Following their participation in the "Girls Shine" sessions, these girls have begun to engage in cultural activities, singing, and other forms of self-expression. This shift indicates a growing trust in BNPS within the community.
- Previously restricted to their camp blocks, girls have now received parental permission to attend significant events, such as the graduation program at the CiC Office, symbolizing a broader acceptance of their rights and freedoms. Additionally, women participants are now attending meetings at the CiC and site management offices, gaining valuable knowledge on various services.

4. Strengthening Relationships:

- A positive relationship has been developed between the adjacent host community and the Rohingya community in Camp-16. This relationship has facilitated open communication, allowing the community to share concerns and issues without hesitation.
- BNPS has maintained strong relations and rapport with the camp-in-charge, various government sectors, and humanitarian actors, ensuring the smooth operation of the project at the camp level while upholding the quality and quantity of activities.

5. Celebrations and Community Engagement:

- BNPS organized day celebrations, cultural competitions, pillow passing, chair games, and rallies with both the host and FDMN communities in Cox's Bazar. These activities have further strengthened community bonds and fostered a sense of unity.

6. Monitoring and Feedback:

- To ensure the effectiveness and responsiveness of camp-level activities, BNPS practices Success Story and CFRM Tracking, which have contributed to the satisfaction and engagement of the community.

Impact and Contributions: The project has successfully contributed to fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for women and girls in Rohingya Camp-16. By engaging men and community leaders, BNPS has been instrumental in driving social change and challenging deep-rooted biases. The positive shifts in community attitudes towards women's rights and the active participation of women and girls in cultural and educational activities demonstrate the project's impact. Additionally, the strengthened relationship between the host and Rohingya communities, coupled with BNPS's recognized role in humanitarian response, underscores the success of the initiative.



Rokeya Kabir, ED-BNPS talking with children at Rohingya camp 16, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar

Comprehensive, Integrated Multi-Sector Response for Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

This project is a continuation and expansion of previous efforts. In its current phase, the project has been extended to include Rohingya Camps No. 16, 18, and 25 in Ukhiya, with a focused emphasis on mitigating gender-based violence (GBV). The specific objective is to "improve safe and dignified access to quality GBV prevention and response services." The project aims to achieve two key outcomes: (1) increased knowledge among community members about where to access available services for addressing GBV, and (2) ensuring that GBV survivors receive appropriate referral services based on their individual needs.

During the reporting period, BNPS has focused on implementing several critical initiatives, including the Girls Shine program for adolescent girls and caregivers,

Engaging Men in Accountable Practices (EMAP), local government involvement, the SASA! Together approach, and GBV case management support. These initiatives are being delivered through the 'Women and Girls' Safe Spaces (WGSS), with most of the activities in this period being preparatory in nature.

Through this expanded project, BNPS continues to play a pivotal role in addressing gender-based violence in the Rohingya camps, ensuring that women and girls have access to the resources and support they needed. The project's success in building strong partnerships, fostering community trust, and actively engaging in strategic decision-making underscores BNPS's commitment to advancing women's rights in even the most challenging environments.

Women Peacebuilders Lead Social Cohesion: Enhancing capacities and collaboration of women civil society groups from host community

In cooperation with UN Women, BNPS has been carrying out this project in the host communities of Cox's Bazar district, where men's and religious dominance restricts women's freedoms, including their access to facilities that meet their basic needs. Additionally, the region faces deep-rooted cultural challenges such as underage marriage, polygamy, inadequate education, limited engagement in income-generating activities, and the marginalization of women in both the host and camp settings.

To better support women in the community and enhance the effectiveness of local women-led organizations in preventing GBV and challenging harmful social norms, BNPS seeks to build the programmatic and technical capacities of community-based organizations (CBOs). As a result, the selected CBOs developed initiatives to raise public awareness and improve knowledge about humanitarian responses for wellbeing of women and girls. These CBOs have undertaken various initiatives to increase the capacity of women, men, youth, girls, and local leaders to participate in peacebuilding efforts within the host communities,

while also addressing and preventing different forms of GBV.

During this reporting period, BNPS organized a gender awareness course for 120 men from six CBO-member families in the Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts. The program provided participants with essential knowledge and information about gender, sex, discrimination, VAWG, GBV, CEFM, polygamy, and the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017. The training resulted in a majority of men adopting a positive mindset, supporting CBO members in their efforts to remove barriers to employment and increase the mobility of their family members.

Among 200 women in 6 CBOs, social bonds and a sense of togetherness have been strengthened as they support one another in their daily lives. The CBOs also participated in several community-wide initiatives to address issues such as violence against women, CEFM, and social and cultural events that promote social cohesion and peacebuilding. In response to the crisis affecting women and girls in the host community, the CBOs have enhanced their humanitarian response capabilities.



CBO Joint Coordination meeting at Palongkhali High school, Ukhiya

Women's leadership on Improving peace, socio-economic stability and participation in power corridor in Cox's Bazar

BNPS, in partnership with Upoma Nari Kallyan Sangstha (UNKS) and Rohingya Women Empowerment (RWE), has implemented the project aimed at capacity building for women and girls in both host community and Rohingya camp. The project includes leadership development and training programs, focusing on social and economic empowerment. The humanitarian interventions have directly benefited 705 women, young women, and girls, including 9 women with disabilities. The

interventions include multi-sectoral services for protection, women's leadership, education on human rights, and peacebuilding.

The project has had positive impacts on the lives of women and girls, increasing awareness of human rights, education, gender equality, and economic development. The inclusive and gender-preventive programming has positively impacted the well-being of women and girls in the host communities during the reporting period.

Results Achieved:

- In 2023, a total of 705 women, young women, and girls (450 women, 225 young women, and 30 girls) from the host community became organized and aware of their entitlement to equal rights. They actively engaged in decision-making processes related to the prevention of and protection from GBV and child marriage.
- Women with daughters decided against arranging marriages before the age of 18, opting instead to prioritize their daughters' education to ensure they become self-reliant.
- They are now utilizing government helplines and seeking support from local leaders, such as the Chairman, Counselor, school teachers, and community committees, to prevent violence.



Training to Clear Concept on Gender Equality, PM Khali Asroyon Prokolpo, Cox's Bazar Sadar

Upholding Rights of Minorities beyond Borders – South Asia (URBB):

Upholding Rights of Minorities beyond Borders – South Asia (URBB) was a 3 years long multi-country project started in 2019 which was impacted a lot by Covid in its 2nd and 3rd year. That was why the back donor EU permitted a 6 months long no-cost extension of the project till June 2022.

The overall objective of the project was to promote, enhance and sustain civil society action in South Asia reinforcing principles of pluralism and multi-culturalism respecting freedom of religion and or belief based on principles of dignity, equality, non-discrimination and democratic rights. The project had been working on reinforcing

capacities and skills of organizations and networks in combating discrimination, intolerance and violence on the grounds of religion and belief and producing status report of religious minorities.

During the extended period, BNPS organized a few events like operating 2 fact finding missions, organized human chain for demanding exemplary punishment of the culprit against female minority teacher, organized advocacy meeting to uphold rights of women and girls child, organized a roundtable with duty bearers on democracy, secularism and effective implementation of laws and translating country report into Bangla.

Capacity Building Program of BNPS

Women Group:

- In 2022 and 2023, BNPS organized transformative and advanced leadership training at its centers in Chittagong, Patiya, Sandwip, Netrakona, Barhatta, Dhaka East, and Dhaka West. A total of 27 training batches were completed, with 970 advanced leaders and members of women's groups participating. Additionally, nine batches of training for Women Activist Forum (WAF) members were held in Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachari, with 243 women activists attending.
- Eight batches of training were conducted for women group leaders to enhance their skills as change agents, focusing on preventing gender-based violence, child marriage, and strengthening social harmony. This training reached 160 women group members in Netrakona, Barhatta, Dhaka East, and Dhaka West.
- BNPS also completed 15 batches of training on Income Generating Activities (IGA) development, benefiting 150 members of women's groups at its centers in Chittagong, Patiya, and Sandwip.
- Furthermore, six batches of capacity-building training on human rights, gender equality, diversity, empowerment, leadership, and conflict transformation were held in Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachari during 2022-2023, with 180 women headmen (traditional leaders of the Chittagong Hill Tracts) participating.

Adolescents, Youth Groups, and Students:

BNPS conducted a series of training programs aimed at developing adolescents and youth as change agents to prevent gender-based violence, stop child marriage, and strengthen social harmony.

Adolescents: Eight batches of training were held at BNPS Centers in Netrakona, Barhatta, Dhaka East, and Dhaka West where 160 adolescent girls from classes 6 to 10 participated.

Youth:

- Twenty batches of training on "Gender and Transformational Leadership Development" were organized in Chittagong, Patiya, and Sandwip, involving 160 youth group members and students.
- Four batches of training focused on conceptual clarity regarding gender equality and voluntarism, along with four batches on gender and SRHR were conducted in Netrakona, Barhatta, Dhaka East, and Dhaka West where 160 youth group members participated.
- Eight day-long training sessions on preventing and combating child marriage were held in Netrakona, Barhatta, Dhaka East, and Dhaka West, reaching 158 youth members.
- Four batches of training on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies were conducted in Netrakona and Barhatta with participation of 40 youth group members.

University Students: Two batches of training on non-discrimination, secularism, and volunteerism were organized for 40 selected students from the University of Chittagong and the University of Dhaka.

School Teachers: BNPS organized four batches of training for 120 selected secondary school teachers from Patiya, Chittagong city, and Sandwip. The training focused on creating gender-friendly environments within secondary schools.

Partner: Under the OLHF Project, BNPS conducted a series of training programs during this reporting period, focusing on various skills and thematic issues:

- **Facilitation and Communication Skills:** Training on facilitation and interpersonal communication skills for 40 trainers and project facilitators (PF), including specialized training on SRHR-GBV issues and psychosocial counseling.
- **Reusable Sanitary Pads:** Refresher training on the production of reusable sanitary pads for 10 trainers.
- **Thematic Issues and SRHR/GBV:** Special training sessions for 13 trainers and master trainers (MTs) on thematic issues, SRHR, GBV, and community session facilitation.

- **Financial and Project Management:** Refresher training on financial management, project management, and administrative practices for 20 project coordinators (PCs) and accountants.
- **Advocacy Training:** Workshops on advocacy concepts and strategies, and fundraising training for 30 executive directors (EDs), PCs, and advocacy officers.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Refresher training on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), outcome-oriented monitoring, and tools for 10 M&E officers.
- **CSO Staff Training:** Training on facilitation in adolescent-friendly health services (AFHS) and refresher training for health service providers for 20 PCs and trainers.



Rokeya Kabir delivering inaugural speech in the training on secularism, diversity, gender equality and role of youth

Organizational Capacity Development of project staff Central Office

Financial Management Training: A three-day training titled "Financial Management, Program Reporting, Monitoring, and Related Governance [Finance & Non-Finance Personnel]" was held from March 27-29, 2022, at the BNPS Conference Room. The training aimed to enhance project staffs understanding of financial management, program reporting, and monitoring. Participants gained skills in financial and organizational management, contributing to effective project implementation and awareness of organizational policies on gender and equality.

Conflict Sensitivity and Transformation Training: A training session was organized to foster a common understanding of conflict sensitivity and transformation among 29 project staff members (13 women and 16 men). The training aimed to help participants analyze conflict situations in their working areas and enhance their roles as peacebuilders.

Gender Equality and Facilitation Skills Training: On December 22-23, 2021, BNPS conducted a two-day training on gender equality, awareness, and facilitation skills at BNPS Conference Room. The session focused on clarifying concepts related to gender parity, equal citizenship, patriarchal society, and violent extremism. The training aimed to develop the analytical skills of project staff so that they can effectively convey these concepts through their project activities.

Training on Gender and Climate Change Adaptation:

On January 17-18, 2023, a two-day training was organized at BNPS Central Office to enhance the conceptual clarity on gender, climate change adaptation, resilience issues, and facilitation skills. The training aimed to build the capacity of the AWAM project staff in understanding climate change adaptation and resilience. It also focused on strategies for engaging youth groups as effective change agents in addressing climate change challenges, promoting resilience, and implementing mitigation and coping strategies within their communities.

Special Initiatives

Gender Responsive Curriculum Integration and Advocacy Efforts

Over the past 20 years, BNPS has collaborated with the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), academic and teachers' associations, research and education institutes, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to integrate SRHR concerns into the curriculum and enhance gender sensitivity within Bangladesh's national education system. Concurrently, BNPS has undertaken initiatives to raise awareness among adolescents and youth about SRHR education, facilitating access to services and creating a supportive environment. To address misinformation and ensure informed discussions on curriculum reforms, BNPS developed an analysis paper on the new competency-based curriculum. This key-note paper, titled "Competency-Based New Curriculum of Bangladesh: Challenges and Ways Forward," was prepared with the assistance of Ms. Iffat Naomee, Chairperson of the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology of IER, University of Dhaka. The paper highlighted implementation challenges, potential solutions, and served as the foundation for a critical roundtable discussion.



Shyamali Nasreen Chaudhury, Chairperson of BNPS, delivering her speech in the roundtable discussion on competency based new curriculum of Bangladesh: challenges and way forward

On December 13, 2023, BNPS, Concerned Women for Family Development (CWFD), and UNFPA held a national-level dialogue in Dhaka to address concerns about the new curriculum. The event, led by BNPS Executive Director Rokeya Kabir, focused on accurate, evidence-based information. Speakers were included educators, activists, and civil society representatives. The dialogue aimed to address recent criticisms and provide recommendations for future curriculum development.

Key Outcomes and Recommendations:

- **Shifting Educational Focus:** Education system of Bangladesh is increasingly emphasizing science education, yet parents remain focused on memorization. There is a need to balance these priorities to foster a more holistic educational approach.
- **Role of Mass Media:** Mass media plays a crucial role in creating an educational environment. Campaigns and dialogues through social media and other platforms should increase awareness among parents and SMCs.
- **Funding and Resources:** There is a need for increased funding for gender-responsive education, teacher training, and school infrastructure. Improvements in classroom facilities, teaching aids, and resources are essential.
- **Addressing Misinformation:** Public fairs on education and strict procedures to prevent propaganda and misinformation are necessary to dispel misconceptions and ensure accurate implementation of curriculum guidelines.

The dialogue concluded with a commitment from participants to implement activities in alignment with curriculum guidelines, aiming to enhance educational quality and address existing challenges effectively.

Collaborative Initiative for Gender-Responsive Policing



Rokeya Kabir and Nasrin Begum with other participants of Annual Training Conference of Police 2022, organized by Bangladesh Police Women Network (BPWN)

The Bangladesh Police Women Network (BPWN), in partnership with BNPS, has developed an online module on Gender Responsive Policing. This initiative, which involved multiple workshop sessions, aims to sensitize police personnel to gender issues, promote violence-free workplaces, and enhance their involvement in the decision-making process.

BNPS actively participated in the Annual Training Conference 2022, where the Executive Director and the Coordinator for Capacity Building served as panel discussants on topics related to women's empowerment and gender equality. BPWN has also contributed to various programs within the CSO platform, focusing on the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and its implementation.

Through this collaboration, BNPS has supported the police department on WPS issues and advanced gender-responsive policing practices. BPWN's efforts in creating a gender-responsive and inclusive environment within the Bangladesh Police have been commendable, contributing significantly to BNPS's goals related to gender equality.

ASEAN-Bangladesh Youth Peace Exchange



Youth team exchanging their experience under Bangladesh-South East Asian Women and Youth Peace Exchange program

BNPS, in partnership with the GNWP, organized a three-day workshop from 29-31 August 2022 for the ASEAN-Bangladesh Youth Peace Exchange with the support of Global Affairs Canada's Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOP) that brought together young leaders from the region to the heart of the crisis, raising awareness and enabling a space for collective collaboration in demanding more action

from their respective governments. The 20 members of the YWL Bangladesh network and 5 youth leaders from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand who attended the workshop shared experience in women, peace and security, youth, peace and security, women's rights, and gender equality issues.

International Contribution

Rokeya Kabir, Executive Director, BNPS contributed in international events on WPS and Counter Terrorism as WPS Focal Point of Bangladesh. During this reporting period she actively participated in the following events:

- High Level International Conference on International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists, organized by UN Office of Counter Terrorism in Dushanb, Tajikistan on 18-19 October 2022.
- Inter-Regional Meeting on WPS Focal Points Network, organized by UN Women in Pretoria, South Africa on 06-07 December 2022.
- Fifth Capital-Level Meeting of the WPS Focal Point Network, organized by WPS Focal Points Network Co-Chairs United States and Romania in Washington, DC on 06-08 June 2023.
- Regional Conference on Promoting Peaceful and Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific: Experience in Advancing the WPS Agenda, organized by UN Women in Bangkok, Thailand on 09-11 August 2023.



Rokeya Kabir delivering her speech in the High-Level International Conference organized by UN Office of Counter Terrorism in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Rising Voices: Asian Women's Feminist Humanitarian Leaders in regional convening

BNPS had played a catalyst role in the preparation and selection of a country report presenter; shared country-level experience and learning in the convention which was held from 1 to 5 May 2022 at the Hotel Churtium Sathon Bangkok, Thailand. Over 80 Asian women leaders and stakeholders from 10 countries came together to discuss, learn about, and celebrate the power of women's leadership in local humanitarian action. From Bangladesh, 8 leaders of WROs and 2

staff of BNPS attended, and the other WROs were joined online. The participants appreciated the regional convening as the space enabled them to learn from one another and build networks for women leaders on gender-responsive humanitarian actions. WROs of Bangladesh have been capable of playing an advocacy role to influence authorities and implementing agencies for making gender responsive fund mobilizing agenda for WROs.

BANGLADESH NARI PROGATI SANGHA(BNPS)
Consolidated Financial Account
Statement of Financial Position
As at June 30, 2022

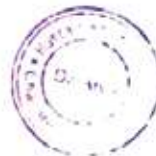
PERTICULARS	Note	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2022	30.06.2021
PROPERTY AND ASSETS			
FIXED ASSETS	Note-1	11,950,406	12,449,979
INVESTMENT-FDR ACCOUNT	Note-2	2,049,660	1,983,922
CURRENT ASSETS:			
SECURITY DEPOSIT-T&T (AS PER LAST ACCOUNT)		15,000	15,000
ADVANCE & PREPAID ACCOUNT	Note-3	13,032,779	17,826,485
CLOSING BALANCE			
CASH IN HAND	Note-4	79,848	117,828
CASH AT BANK	Note-4	16,776,449	7,035,526
TOTAL		43,904,142	39,428,740
FUND AND LIABILITIES			
		Amount in Taka	
	Note	30.06.2022	30.06.2021
EQUITY/FUND ACCOUNT			
RESTRICTED FUND -UNUTILIZED DONOR FUND	Note-5	28,099,012	23,624,357
UNRESTRICTED FUND -GENERAL PROGRAM FUND	Note-6	2,145,827	2,187,215
ASSETS FUND ACCOUNT	Note-7	11,950,406	12,449,979
SHORT TERM LIABILITIES :			
STAFF WELFARE FUND	Note-8	78,944	86,312
LOAN ACCOUNT-PAYABLE	Note-9	430,000	500,000
OUTSTANDING LIABILITIES-PROVISION FOR EXPENSES	Note-10	1,199,953	580,877
TOTAL		43,904,142	39,428,740

The annexed Schedules 1 to 22 from an integral part of these financial statements.

Signed in terms of our separate report of even date


Executive Director
BNPS


Accounts Officer
BNPS



DVC: 2211160248AS766570
Dated: Dhaka, 16th November, 2022.

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Hussain Khaja & Co.
Chartered Accountants

BANGLADESH NARI PROGATI SANGHA (BNPS)

Consolidated Financial Account

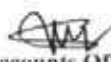
Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2023

PERTICULARS	Note	Amount in Taka	
		30 June 2023	30 June 2022
PROPERTY AND ASSETS			
NON CURRENT ASSETS:			
FIXED ASSETS	Note-1	10,965,326	11,950,406
INVESTMENT-FDR ACCOUNT	Note-2	2,128,700	2,049,660
CURRENT ASSETS:			
SECURITY DEPOSIT-T&T (AS PER LAST ACCOUNT)		15,000	15,000
ADVANCE & PREPAID ACCOUNT	Note-3	5,215,429	13,032,779
CLOSING BALANCE			
CASH IN HAND	Note-4	68,908	79,848
CASH AT BANK	Note-4	22,073,772	16,776,449
TOTAL		40,467,135	43,904,142
FUND AND LIABILITIES		Amount in Taka	
	Note	30 June 2023	30 June 2022
EQUITY/FUND ACCOUNT			
RESTRICTED FUND -UNUTILIZED DONOR FUND	Note-5	26,528,327	28,099,012
UNRESTRICTED FUND -GENERAL PROGRAM FUND	Note-6	2,394,297	2,145,827
ASSETS FUND ACCOUNT	Note-7	10,965,326	11,950,406
CURRENT LIABILITIES :			
STAFF WELFARE FUND	Note-8	79,228	78,944
LOAN ACCOUNT-PAYABLE	Note-9	200,000	430,000
OUTSTANDING LIABILITIES-PROVISION FOR EXPENSES	Note-10	299,957	1,199,953
TOTAL		40,467,135	43,904,142

The annexed Schedules an integral part of these financial statements.


Executive Director
BNPS
Rokeya Kabir
Executive Director
Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha


Accounts Officer
BNPS
Signed in terms of our separate report of even date

Dated: Dhaka, 12 November, 2023.
DVC : 2311120248AS645443

Page 3


Khaja Shafiq Uddin Ali Ahmed, FCA
ICAB Enrolment No-248
Partner
Hussain Khaja & Co.
Chartered Accountants



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