



BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Brac University, is a Bangladesh-based social science research and academic institute, dedicated to generating and sharing knowledge through education, research, and public and policy engagement in equitable partnerships with national and global actors.



We deeply value knowledge that is solution-driven and rooted in local context so that we can contribute to the Southern-led process of charting our unique pathways to shared prosperity and sustainable development, [our vision of knowledge for a better world](#).

Changing Village Study, Taking on the Challenge of First-Mile Development Research

Bangladeshi villages have been going through profound changes in recent decades, but there is no thorough, formative research on the nature of these changes. Thus, BIGD has taken this project to capture the transformations that took place in Bangladeshi villages in key areas including culture, agriculture, migration, built environment, climate and environment, financial inclusion, and institutional arrangement. We intend to support researchers, practitioners, and policymakers with useful contextual knowledge about today's Bangladeshi villages.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Adaptation (MELA)

The crucial learning role of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools is often overshadowed by the urgency of their accountability role—i.e., reporting achievements against agreed outcomes of development programmes—and a dearth of clear, practical guidelines on how to use M&E for learning and adaptation. Our new MELA initiative aims to fill this gap. The MELA team offers technical advisory services to complex projects with the goal of using M&E for learning and adaptation, utilizing methods such as developmental evaluation, outcome mapping, outcome harvesting, and contribution analysis.





//Photo: BRAC



Economic

The overarching objective of our economic research is to contribute to equitable, shared, and sustainable economic prosperity, encompassing a wide range of themes including extreme poverty and livelihoods, skills and jobs, migration, human capital, behavioural and psycho-social development, and financial inclusion.

Leaving No One Behind: Studies on Enabling Persons With Disabilities to Realize Their Potentials

BRAC's Disability Inclusive Ultra-Poor Graduation (DIUPG) programme supports ultra-poor individuals with disabilities and their families in escaping poverty, and its STAR+ initiative has adapted its mainstream Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR) programme geared towards the youth to better support trainees with disabilities.

We did a rapid assessment of the DIUPG pilot to assess early impact and recommend improvements; now we are evaluating the programme at scale using a randomized controlled trial (RCT). We have also partnered with researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) in an RCT on the STAR+ programme, combined with a qualitative exportation of the challenges in programme goal attainment.

Leonard Cheshire, a UK-based charity, is partnering with several non-profits to implement a programme in 45 Bangladeshi government schools to enhance inclusive education for children with disabilities. BIGD, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, is investigating the effectiveness of this approach for developing inclusive school systems in Bangladesh, using a mixed method.



Economic Empowerment of Underprivileged Women in the Developing World: Can Training on Online Freelancing and ChatGPT Play a Role?

Coder's Trust—an international institute specializing in skills training for the digital era—ran a project to train underprivileged young Bangladeshi women in online freelancing. BIGD performed an RCT to assess the programme's impact and an in-depth qualitative enquiry to find the underlying enabling and challenging factors. With technical support from computer science researchers at North South University and Fordham University, we are developing a training module on using ChatGPT to advance freelancing careers. This module will be offered to the women who participated in the training programme to explore how ChatGPT can jumpstart their freelancing careers.



Environment and Climate Change

We examine the impact of environment and climate change on livelihoods and how human and institutional responses to these changes affect different population segments, using a ground-up approach that considers the socioeconomic and environmental realities of the affected population. Themes include livelihood adaptation, climate migration and urbanization, and green transition.

Climate Resilience and Graduation: Evidence From Bangladesh

This collaborative study, in partnership with London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) researchers and BRAC, investigates the interplay between climate change and anti-poverty interventions. Using an RCT, the study evaluates BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) programme in the context of climate-induced vulnerabilities and compares two alternative support strategies—local adaptation and migration—for the affected rural poor. The research design enables an assessment of the programme's efficacy and scalability.





Gender and Social Transformation

We study the factors that disempower women and those that enable them to exercise their agency. We also investigate the diverse pathways for transforming power structures and attaining gender justice. Our areas of interest include women's work, social and gender norms, violence against women, and their collective movements.



Governance and Politics

We study broader issues of politics and democratic governance to generate policy-relevant knowledge to improve governance performance within the existing political, legislative, and policy environment. Themes include citizenship and democracy, labour rights, local governance, social accountability through citizen engagement, and last-mile public service delivery.

In Search of Justice: Untold Tales of Domestic Violence Survivors

During the COVID-19 pandemic, seeking redress for violence against women became challenging as courts and legal aid offices were closed and frontline services were suspended. BIGD explored how women, seeking justice against domestic violence, navigated through families, communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the formal justice system during COVID-19 and the remedies they could obtain. This research used 12 in-depth case studies of women experiencing domestic violence who sought assistance from either the Bangladesh Legal Aid Services and Trust (BLAST), BRAC Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS) programme, or RDRS Bangladesh.



/Photo: Nusrat Jahan/BIGD, BU

The State of Bangladesh's Political Governance, Development and Society: According to Its Citizens

Since 2019, BIGD has partnered with the Asia Foundation (TAF) to periodically track Bangladeshi citizens' perceptions regarding governance, development, and society. Two rounds of nationally representative surveys have been conducted since then. The latest round, conducted in 2022, tracked a range of issues, including political governance and representation, citizenship, democracy, and inclusive development. The survey provides valuable insights into citizens' views on the functioning and performance of the government of Bangladesh. The periodic nature of the survey also allows an analysis of how these perceptions evolve over time—a proxy indicator for the political and economic trajectory of the country.



//Photo: Firoza Ashrafee/BIGD, BU

Academics

BIGD's Master's programmes are designed to provide a practical and globally relevant education. Our approach revolves around adult learning and student-centric teaching. We prioritize hands-on experience through extensive practicums and field exposure, fostering a deep understanding of real-world challenges. Our faculty members, comprising globally recognized experts and accomplished practitioners, bring diverse perspectives to the classroom, enriching the learning experience. Our global yet grounded approach to education prepares our graduates to navigate the challenges of the interconnected, complex world with the perspectives, skills, and knowledge required to advance their professional missions.

Academic Programmes

Master of Development Studies (MDS), a pioneering development-focused programme in Bangladesh, with alumni spread across Asia and Africa.

Master of Arts in Governance and Development (MAGD), for building a new generation of impactful actors in the development-focused public policy space.

Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM), one of its kind in Bangladesh, building capacities to improve transparency and efficiency in public, development, and private sector procurement.

Specialized Training

Post Graduate Diploma in Knitwear Industry Management (PGD-KIM), specifically designed to impart the capabilities required to take on managerial and leadership roles in the ready-made garments (RMG) industry, particularly within the knitwear sector.

The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), an internationally recognized, 30-month certification programme for procurement and supply chain professionals.

Partnerships



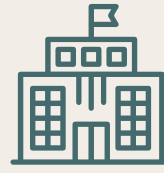
Equitable Partnerships

We follow the principles of equity in our partnerships with implementing organizations and national and international research institutes by providing distinctive intellectual inputs—from research conceptualization and analysis to output production and policy engagement.



Formative to Scale-Up: Research Partnership With BRAC

We closely work with several BRAC programmes, including UPG, Skill Development, Climate Change, Microfinance, Migration, and Social Empowerment and Legal Protection. This partnership entails formative research for informing new interventions, process evaluations of pilots for fine-tuning interventions, and evaluation of interventions at scale.



Issue-Based Partnerships

Apart from study-specific collaborations, BIGD is engaged in several issue-based partnerships with global research institutes. We are a research partner in the new BRAC LSE Ultra-Poor and Environment (BLUE) initiative, which focuses on ideas, innovations, and evidence to make growth work for the twin crises of poverty and climate. BIGD is also a partner in the Yale Research Initiative on Innovation and Scale (Y-RISE), which advances research on the scalability of policy interventions.



Government Partnerships

BIGD engages with the government with a solution-oriented approach. We developed and tested a model of citizen engagement for monitoring public works projects in partnership with the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) of the Ministry of Planning. Additionally, BIGD's PGD-KIM academic programme is a partnership with the Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) of the Ministry of Finance; PGD-KIM is designed to train the much-needed middle management skills gap in Bangladesh's knitwear sector, one of the largest export sectors of the country.



BIGD is a social science research and post-graduate teaching institute of Brac University.

বিআইজিডি ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের একটি সামাজিক গবেষণা এবং স্নাতকোত্তর শিক্ষাদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান।

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