

Considered a rising star in South Asia, Bangladesh has demonstrated considerable economic progress over the last two decades. At the same time, social upheaval, political conflict, and a narrowing space for civil society pose challenges. Recognizing that a robust civil society is necessary for maintaining a peaceful and stable Bangladesh, Promoting Advocacy and Rights (PAR), a six-and-half year Activity, seeks to strengthen the enabling environment for sustained civil society institutions that advance democratic governance and citizen participation. PAR engages civil society leaders and governmental stakeholders to review policies and develop evidence-based recommendations and advocacy platforms that support an enabling environment for civic space where human rights are respected, and pluralistic traditions are maintained.

Key Highlights of the Program

11



11 grants awarded to support local advocacy

2700



Strengthened civic capacity and participation of 2,700 civic actors

187



Formed 187 community based platforms for strengthening governance

15



Recommendations to solid waste management rules



PAR Key Accomplishments and Outcomes:

Strengthened understanding of the complex civic space through the production of a CSO Legal Manual and organized legal seminars for 322 civil society actors, digital safety training for 129 CSOs, a workshop on navigating the Digital Security Act for 44 CSO participants, and workshops on the Right to Information for 120 CSO participants, journalists, and government officials.

Advanced accountable governance by establishing dialogues between civil society and government that led to 15 recommendations being included in the 2021 Solid Waste Management Rules. In 2023, a PAR-supported network convinced the Khulna City Corporation mayoral candidates to include citizen demands for improved urbanization, sanitation, water, and waste management in their election platforms.

Bangladeshi organizations have improved organizational capacity and their ability to advocate for citizen-identified priorities, engaging new and historically marginalized populations that include women, youth, and ethnic minorities.

Several changes in government legislation, policy, and mechanisms have been achieved through PAR-funded advocacy led by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, including the draft Social Welfare Act. Additionally, PAR made recommendations through assessments of the Digital Security Act 2018 and the Foreign Donations Regulation Act 2016 and presented them in a high-level conference in March 2023. Following the event, the Law Minister committed to work collaboratively with civil society to improve the legal environment for their operations in Bangladesh.

