

Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS) Programme

“Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”
– Paulo Freire

Our barefoot lawyers deliver justice services at the doorsteps of millions as the pioneering troop of the world’s largest NGO-led legal empowerment initiative, which is currently in its 27th year of operations. We organise legal education classes at the grassroots level transferring knowledge of rights, provide legal aid through our legal aid clinics, engage local community leaders and make them aware of legal and human rights issues so that they act as agents of social change.

Our three-pronged approaches

Human rights and legal education- The human rights and legal education (HRLE) classes educate women about their legal rights, fundamental laws, and existing legal aid frameworks, to raise critical mass awareness needed to oppose injustices.



HRLS client consulting with a Panel lawyer

Community mobilisation-

Workshops with grassroots community leaders are organised locally to increase awareness on gender equality, encourage participation, and develop human rights knowledge. Mobilising the elite is a first step to reducing corruption and enhancing coordination to prevent structural mistreatment of vulnerable people in both government and social institutions.

Legal aid clinics- The HRLS programme has 517 legal aid clinics countrywide. The clinics are a one-stop solution for poor and excluded community members especially women to receive legal counsel, and have access to alternative dispute resolution (ADR), legal coordination and support networks. With these resources HRLS helps individuals build a case, understand the legal system, and get the comprehensive medical and social support they need in the wake of an injustice.

What we've done until February 2016

Legal awareness (commenced in 1986) and legal aid services (commenced in 1998)

Human Rights and Legal Education (HRLE) graduates	3,977,976
HRLE courses conducted	171,836
No. of rights implementation - <i>Odhikar Bastobayon Committee</i> (OBC) workshops	42,861
Barefoot lawyers	6,350
Odhikar shebis	14,405
Local community leaders (LCL) workshops (district, upazila and union)	17,841
LCL workshop participants'	359,359
Complaints received at the legal aid clinics	253,024
Complaints resolved by ADRs	136,637
Cases sent to court	52,117
Judgments received from cases	25,115
Amount of money claimed and recovered through ADR and court in favour of clients	BDT 1,542,931,393

Property Rights Initiative (PRI) (commenced in 2011)

Number of participants graduated from the PRI focused HRLE course	69,628
Number of trained male Land Entrepreneurs (LEs)	713
Number of trained female LEs	79
Total number of clients served by LEs	88,210
Number of free land measurement services offered by the LEs to ultra-poor clients	4,012

Improvement of the Real Situation of Overcrowding in Prisons (IRSOP) (commenced in 2009)

Bail/release	1,786
Legal assistance	2,565
Legal intervention	20,321
Persons assisted at court	6,558
Persons assisted at police station (<i>thana</i>)	989

Juvenile Justice - Juvenile Development Centre (JDC) (commenced in 2012)

Bail/release from JDC	1,786
Legal assistance	2,565
Contact with family	20,321
Provide next date	6,558

Juvenile Justice (Shelter Homes) (Commenced in 2014)

Release from Vagrant home	98
Contact with family	141
Assisted in filing general diary with the local police station	79
Assistance provided in submitting application to superintendent of home	98