

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 December 2014

Human rights and legal education courses conducted	168,873
Human rights and legal education graduates	3,902,854
Odhikar bastobayon committee workshops	39,939
Local community leaders workshops (district, sub-district and union)	17,095
Participants of local community leaders' workshops	344,777
Complaints received at legal aid clinics	229,111
Complaints resolved by alternative dispute resolutions	123,299
Cases sent to court	46,354
Cases that received judgement in favour of the clients	22,271
Monetary compensation (in BDT) received through ADR and court	1,276,540,681
Barefoot lawyers	6,245
Odhikar shebis	14,252