

OPEN SOCIETY IN

BANGLADESH

The Open Society Foundations, established by George Soros, are one of the world's largest private funders of groups supporting human rights, justice, and accountable government—with annual expenditures of \$1.7 billion in 2023.

From 2004, Open Society has provided funding for a range of human rights and justice issues in Bangladesh, including support for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, freedom of expression, and education.

Open Society's engagement with Bangladesh has included significant cooperation with BRAC, the nongovernmental organization that is now one of the world's largest nonprofit groups working on international development.

BANGLADESH: 2023 EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures for
Bangladesh in 2023:

\$0.4M

Total Expenditures in Asia Pacific in 2023:

\$80.9M

Total Global Expenditures in 2023:

\$1.7B

9 FACTS ABOUT THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS IN BANGLADESH

- 1** Grassroots legal groups supported by Open Society have played a vital role in safeguarding—through free legal aid services—Bangladesh’s most vulnerable communities.
- 2** Open Society was one of the first major foundations to support the creation of the Asian University for Women, an independent university in Chittagong, Bangladesh, dedicated to women’s education and leadership development. As of 2024, more than 1,800 students from 20 countries, including Bangladesh, had graduated from the university.
- 3** In 2010, Open Society helped establish an advanced course for early childhood professionals at the Institute for Educational Development of BRAC University, based in Dhaka. Three postgraduate programs were developed by a team of international professors and co-delivered jointly with Bangladeshi professors.
- 4** In 2017, Open Society supported Bangladesh’s response to the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fleeing persecution in Myanmar, with a donation of \$10 million to support refugees and local host communities. The bulk of this funding supported work by BRAC.
- 5** In 2020, BRAC University became the first university from South Asia to join an Open Society supported global network of educational institutions dedicated to advancing knowledge, promoting civic engagement, and expanding access to higher education.
- 6** Open Society’s global effort to promote freedom of expression includes support for journalism, and arts and culture in Bangladesh.
- 7** In 2022, Open Society provided financial guarantees to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to lower the costs of a COVID vaccine for low-income target countries including Bangladesh.
- 8** In Bangladesh, as elsewhere around the world, Open Society has partnered with local organizations that promote community-based support models for people with disabilities, including mental health resources.
- 9** Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, the late founder of BRAC, was awarded the Open Society Prize by the Central European University in Budapest in 2013. The prize is given annually “to an outstanding individual whose achievements have contributed substantially to the creation of an open society.”