

## Growing up safe and healthy (SAFE): Addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights & violence against women and girls in Dhaka slums

Women and girls in urban Bangladesh face the denial of their sexual and reproductive health and rights and experience endemic spousal violence. These problems, left unaddressed, hinder empowerment of women and girls and Bangladesh's recent progress in health and development. The SAFE programme was designed to address these problems, particularly in urban slums.

### What is SAFE?

SAFE is an icddr,b led integrated action and research project implemented in Dhaka's slums from November, 2010 to December, 2014. SAFE promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights and addresses violence against women and girls.

### The SAFE model

- Rights-based highlighting consent and choice
- Integration of
  - Health and legal sectors
  - Preventive (i.e., sensitisation, community mobilisation) and curative approaches (i.e., service provision)
  - Interactive group sessions and community mobilisation
  - Multiple target groups (e.g., females and males; groups and community)

### SAFE activities

- Interactive group sessions on gender, rights, health, violence against women, laws, legal provisions and available services with young females and males
- Community mobilisation through campaigns and community volunteers

### Duration of intervention

- 20 months from March 2012 to October 2013

### Who participated in SAFE?

- Females aged 10-29
- Males aged 18 to 35
- Community members

### Where was SAFE implemented?

SAFE was implemented in 19 slums in:

- Jatrabari
- Mohakhali
- Mohammadpur

### Who implemented SAFE?

- icddr,b
- Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)
- Marie Stopes Bangladesh
- Nari Maitree
- Population Council
- We Can Campaign



Slum and non-slum divide in Dhaka  
Photo: Shumon Ahmed

## How was SAFE evaluated?

A cluster randomised controlled trial (RCT) identified SAFE's contribution to changes in the slums at the project's end. The study included three arms:

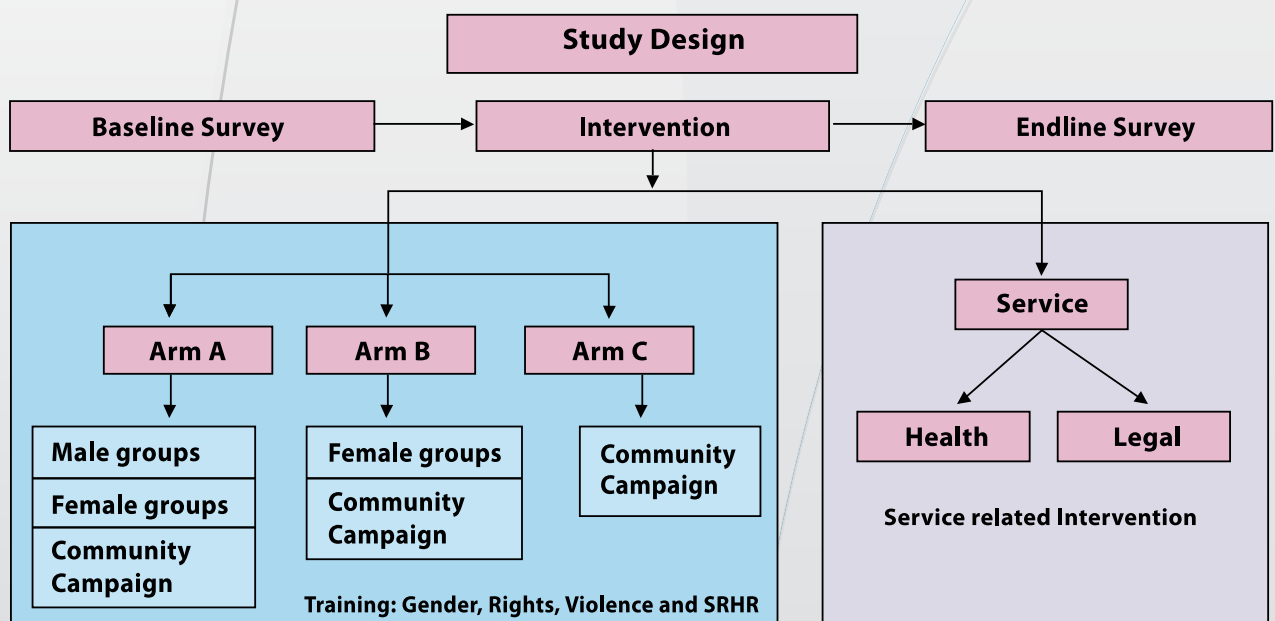
- Arm A included community awareness-raising, access to one-stop service centres and separate group sessions with female and male participants
- Arm B included community awareness-raising, access to one-stop service centres and group sessions with only female participants.
- Arm C, the comparison arm, included community awareness-raising and access to one stop service centres, but had no group sessions.

Quantitative data was collected across arms to identify changes in SRHR and GBV related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. Figure 1 displays the quantitative study design. Qualitative research provided an in-depth understanding of the changes and the processes of change.



Adolescent girls hanging out  
Photo: Mizanur Rahman Shuvra

**Figure 1: SAFE evaluation study design**



icddr,b (International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh) is a not-for-profit international health research institution located in Dhaka. Dedicated to saving lives through research and treatment, icddr,b addresses some of the most critical health concerns facing the world today, ranging from improving neonatal survival to HIV/AIDS. icddr,b conducts research, training and programme-based activities, to develop and share knowledge for global lifesaving solutions