**1. Objective and relevance**

**Purpose:**

Ideally, the civil society in a country that holds local government accountable for the public interest is a cornerstone in any democratic community. However, ordinary citizens in Bangladesh, particularly marginalised women in rural areas, rarely have a strong voice in the local government. Bangladeshi women have been struggling to establish their rights in family, society and the state. Although public welfare schemes exist for citizens and marginalised women, the local government has limited capacity to deliver it. Therefore, there is a need to organise society, where active citizens and the government can and work towards a common goal to achieve gender equality by empowering women.

This intervention follows renowned social economist Naila Kabeer's notion of *women's empowerment.* She refers to empowerment as a 'process' by which those who have been denied the 'ability to make choices' acquire such an 'ability' to make decisions. Further, she mentions three interconnected dimensions of choices: resources, agency, and outcomes. Due to the interconnectedness, only providing access to resources to women would not lead to any outcome unless they develop the agency or ability to make decisions. The intervention will follow this notion in its activities.

This intervention's main purpose would be to promote gender equality through a strong organisation of marginalised women. Facilitating the development of self-help groups (SHG) and community-based organisations (CBO) led by marginalised women is a mechanism as such. The process can be facilitated by providing marginalised women access to different kinds of resources. The SHGs and CBOs will function as a safe platform where marginalised women will practice and develop the ability or agency to make strategic decisions in a democratic way to improve their lives individually and collectively. The intervention intends to build up the capacity of CBOs to do advocacy for women's rights by adopting a right based approach. In this way, they can strengthen their access to the services they are entitled to receive from the local government and change the community's mind-set towards women in general.

## The context of the intervention:

This intervention is planned to be implemented in Gaibandha district which is situated in the northern part of Bangladesh. Gaibandha is one of the poorest, disaster prone districts in Bangladesh with a low literacy rate (below 35%). The project intervention will take place in rural areas of **Shaghata** Upazila (a subdistrict under Gaibandha). The three most socially and economically deprived Unions under Shaghata Upazila, namely **Ghuridaha, Vorotkhali** and **Muktinagar** have been chosen for the intervention.

Like the rest of the country's rural areas, the society in Shaghata is organised hierarchically with different classes. The ownership of land and income arranges the families in the community in different *economic classes* (i.e. higher class or lower class). Another type of class is constructed based on 'patriarchy'**.** Due to these hierarchies, poor men face economic discrimination, while poor women struggle with two barriers, economic discrimination and gender inequality. Patriarchal power includes three additional elements; these are strongly experienced in Shaghata; namely, *kinship system, religion and political system*.

*Firstly,* due to '*kinship'***,** a newly wedded woman leaves her parents, her place of birth and moves to her husband's family and locality. As a result, women lose their social network or safety net and risk being vulnerable to an unknown place. *Secondly,* Islam is the predominant '*religion'*in Shaghata. There are two aspects of the religion that favours the patriarchal structure. One is the manifestations of *'purdah'* which restrict the women's movement outside their household and the other is the "*law of inheritance"*. Due to religious inheritance law, the Muslim women have unequal inheritance rights to property and little control over it. The situation is not very different for Hindu women. Most of the women in the target group are illiterate and not fully aware of their inheritance rights. *Lastly*, in the community men are in control of the political system.  Very few women participate in politics or are rarely seen as community leaders in the areas.

Patriarchy makes young girls less worthy of their parents. As a result, they are often married away at an early age.  Unfortunately, even after the government and non-governmental organisations efforts, Bangladesh has the highest percentage of child marriage in South Asia. According to Unicef (2020), the country average child marriage rate is 51%. Whereas, in Gaibandha 60-69% of women aged 20 to 24 years were married before 18. Thus, in the area early pregnancy after marriages has affected the girls and young women physically and mentally. Most of these women belong to the marginalised communities. Unicef (2020) child marriage report states that government initiative progress has to be at least 17 times faster to solve the issue and meet the SDG target.

In recent years Bangladesh has improved the lives of women and girls in certain areas, such as, the maternal mortality rates are decreasing, the fertility rate is falling and there is gender balance in school enrolment, yet the overall gender gap is increasing (US AID and Global gender gap report, 2020). Currently, 82% of married women face gender-based violence and discrimination. Furthermore, women have limited participation in the workforce and mostly in low-wage sectors in the urban areas, particularly in the textile industry which has been severely affected in this covid-19 situation. Despite several government initiatives, many women are involved in small and medium enterprises but they do not have adequate finance opportunities. All these limitations prevent women from achieving their rights which they are entitled too.

## 2. Partnership

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### Danish Partner

Bandhab was founded in 2006 as a friendship association between Denmark and Bangladesh. Bandhab's mission is to empower marginalised people and communities in Bangladesh and give them a common voice through democratic education and civic participation. The founders worked on a DANIDA-funded international development project based on the Danish folk high school (Folkehøjskole) model, teaching the students valuable life and vocational skills and to become active and engaged members of society. Bandhab is in an endeavour to create a closer friendship between Denmark and Bangladesh by meeting the target group and sharing their life stories in Denmark.  The activities of Bandhab are shared with Danish citizens, Bangladeshi and international people residing in Denmark and Bangladesh through different events and social media.

**Experience:** Bandhab initiated its first project named **GonoKendra.** The project's purpose was to build and sustain so-called GonoKendras, or 'people's centres', where primarily women could come together to form SHGs and CBOs. In these groups and platforms, they could organise themselves, save up money together, learn new life and vocational skills, to campaign against social injustices such as child marriage and gender inequality and ensure their rights are respected. From 2009-2017 Bandhab has implemented the project in three phases in partnership with the former partner BACE and funded by CISU. Evaluation reports from previous projects state that the intervention has empowered the community, especially females in social and economic sectors. The intervention also built the capacity of the CBOs to do right base advocacy at the local level. Moreover, the formed SHGs and CBOs from the previous projects still exist. In 2018-19 Bandhab implemented a self-funded project with voluntary support from BACE and the earlier projects' beneficiaries. Bandhab had in all the projects a strong focus on strengthening and organising civil society in the rural area through employing a right based approach. This intervention is based on experiences and learning from previous projects.

As an organisation, Bandhab has an average of 70 regular members per year. However, in 2020 due to Covid 19 situation, it was difficult to access our members as a result the number dropped to 59. Bandhab has a board of 5 members and 2 elected substitutes. The CSO has three working groups to support the board's activities, namely the project group, communication, and event groups. The current project group consists of members who have knowledge and professional experiences in international development, Bangladeshi culture, project management and gender issues.

### Bangladeshi partner

Udayan Swabolombi Sangstha (USS) started its journey back in 1979 in Shaghata, a subdistrict in Gaibandha District in Bangladesh. As a non-profit organisation, USS has been working with poor, disadvantaged, marginalised people and communities to achieve sustainable development in remote rural areas. In 1981, USS was registered with the Department of Social Welfare and in 1991 with the NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh. USS' vision is to establish a "Justice and Knowledge-based self-supporting society" in Bangladesh. USS has 28 employees, of whom 12 are female staff and 16 are males. The organisation is led by an Executive Committee of seven members and a senior management team consisting of an executive director, a finance and administration manager and a program manager. Besides, USS has 152 volunteers who support USS on an ad hoc basis in natural disaster management, relief distribution and event management.

**Experience:** To date, USS has implemented over 55 development projects in informal education, livelihood improvement, gender equality, women empowerment, health, disaster management and civil society organising funded by foreign donors and international aid agencies. USS has experienced that working directly with the women has contributed significantly to the livelihood, security and development of the rural poor and disadvantaged people in the community. One project stood out among the others and its approach is highly relevant for this planned intervention. USS launched a test project in 1994 called Gram Unnayan Parishad (Rural Development Council). A total of 1,717 marginalised women were organised in 120 SHGs. The groups promoted grass-roots democracy, demanded their rights, and focused on initiating self-savings and promoting micro-enterprises as a means of income generation. However, the sustainability of these groups was not emphasised. Many of these groups became dysfunctional after the project was over, yet some of the beneficiaries became role models in their communities. This phenomenon has been emphasised in this planned intervention.

Furthermore, the following three projects implemented by USS are also relevant for this applied project:  i) a specific gender program with "step towards development" (STD) funded by Netherlands' Embassy. The project had an aim to establish gender equality by ensuring equal participation in all fields of social, cultural and political spheres of lives. ii) The establishment of three Lokomorcha Committee (People's Forum) in Shaghata aimed at strengthening local government, ensuring agricultural support to the community. iii) Establishment of the Gram Adalat (village court) in the community, and iii) enhanced the Stop Violence Against Women (SVAW) program through a right based approach with the help of Governance Coalition (Danida Project).

**Training capacity:** USS has an experienced and competent team of trainers in human rights, education, gender equality, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, organisational development and credit management. The training team also has expertise in module designing and learning. USS has two offices combined with residential training facilities, the main office is situated at Shaghata, Gaibandha (capacity 30-40 pers.) and the other one is in the capital Dhaka (capacity to 50-60 pers.). This is sufficient to facilitate the meetings, seminars and workshops proposed in the planned intervention. USS has long experience in RBA and advocacy at the local level, however, there has been a "brain drain" of experts after phasing out projects in the past. This is a common phenomenon for small and medium sized NGOs. This intervention addresses the issue by planning to hire a short term consultant to build up additional capacity of USS to do advocacy at the state level.

**Network capacity:** USS network capacity consists of partnerships, CBOs networks, civil society groups and locally elected government representatives throughout Bangladesh. Moreover, USS is also a part of numerous network affiliations at the national level (see organisational profile at vores.cisu.dk).

**Collaboration between partners:** Bandhab's former projects were located in the Southern and Northern part of Bangladesh. Bandhab's previous projects' experience has highlighted that the northern part of Bangladesh is economically more deprived than the southern region. Therefore, there was a need for a new partnership in the north part of the country. Bandhab's board members identified USS as a potential partner during a visit in 2018. Following multiple dialogues in 2018 the two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to form a shared understanding and explore future collaboration possibilities. The MoU had a focus to target marginalised people particularly women in the rural areas of Gaibandha district.

**How has the project been prepared:**

The project has been prepared and designed in collaboration between the two partners. To understand the target group better, there have been two field visits by a Bandhab board member in some of the vulnerable communities of Shaghata. Similarly, USS visited Joypurhat to meet the beneficiaries from the GonoKendra project and CBOs where Bandhab had their past interventions. Local female community leaders, local government representatives, and advocates of women's rights have also been involved in the project development to ensure local ownership.

Due to past projects, Bandhab and USS have contextual knowledge of the marginalised women's situation in Bangladesh. Furthermore, USS has provided current data and shared the stories of marginalised women who were beneficiaries of their past implemented projects as well as current ones in Shaghata. The findings showed the need for a project focusing on awareness raising, capacity building, training and advocacy for women's rights. The strengths and weaknesses of previous similar projects were also analysed and taken into consideration. Thus, those experiences have been incorporated into the proposed intervention.

## 3. The intervention

## Target group:

The three most deprived Unions in Shaghata Upazila, namely Ghuridaha, Vorotkhali and Muktinagar were identified and selected as project areas. Each Union has an average population of 25.000 people with nearly an equal distribution of men and women. The majority of the marginalised women in these areas are Muslim and some are low caste Hindus. The average literacy rate of women in this area is below 33%. Most of these women are not well aware of their legal, educational, and healthcare rights.

***The project's primary target group*** are 750 marginalised women from the three above mentioned unions of Shaghata, 250 from each Union respectively who will be organised in SHGs. Marginalised men in the community have different opportunities to organise themselves through sports, work, religious activities, and local politics participation. But due to kinship women have a limited network, "purdah" makes their mobility restricted and women have a little voice in local politics. Therefore, the most vulnerable and marginalised women are selected as beneficiaries in this intervention. Widows, victims of child marriage and women with special needs who are able to attend regular activities in the groups will be prioritised.  A baseline survey will be done at the project's onset to ensure that the most marginalised women join the SHGs. The age group will be approximately 18 to 45. Besides marginalised Muslims, Dalit or low caste Hindu women will be considered as the target group. The majority of the target group will have a low literacy level. Besides, 8-9 USS staff with a majority of women will be trained to lead right based advocacy and promote gender equality. The legal duty bearers such as the Women's' welfare department, social welfare department and agricultural department within Union Parishad (UP) or local government will participate in the intervention. USS and CBO will proactively take the initiative to minimise the gap between the local government and the marginalised women.

***The secondary target group*** will include families of the beneficiaries and other villagers, local religious and political leaders, who will be invited in different activities organised by SHGs, CBOs and USS. This is to include the community aware of the project's activities and also to avoid conflict. Local media will also be invited in different activities to share the project activities in the community.

***Partner's authenticity in relation to the target group:***

USS is primarily located in the project area and has worked in the local communities since 1979. All the employees at the organisation are from the area, and some of them belong to marginalised communities themselves. Therefore, USS has in-depth knowledge about the area, the target group and the issues and challenges faced by the women. They also have experience with motivating, involving and collaborating with the target group and the different actors within the area.

## Objectives and expected results of the intervention

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| **Development Objective:** Achieve gender equality and a strong organisation of marginalised women in Ghuridaha, Vorotkhali and Muktinagar unions of Shaghata Upazila, Bangladesh  ***Immediate objective 1:*** *In the three unions of Shaghata Upazila, 750 marginalised women are organised in 30 SHGs and are aware of their rights, have income-generating skills and have organisational skills.*  **Expected Results**   * 10 SHG are formed in each union and 30 in total. * 750 women in 30 SHGs have self-saving skills and have received training in income-generating activities. * 750 women in 30 SHGs are aware of women's rights. * The members have the organisational capacity to operate SHG.   ***Immediate objective 2:*** *In the three unions of Shaghata Upazila, the 30 SHGs are arranged in the form of CBOs and gain the capacity to do advocacy and promote women's rights.*  **Expected Results**   * In three unions, three executive committees (7x3) for CBO are elected by the group members. * The members of the executive committee of CBO have gained organisational capacity. * The CBO have gained the capacity to do right based advocacy and promote women's rights in their respective community. * CBOs fulfilled the requirement and are registered under the local government's women welfare department or social welfare department as a CBO.   ***Immediate objective 3:*** *The local partner USS has gained the capacity to lead right based advocacy and promote gender equality at the national and local levels in collaboration with the CBOs.*  **Expected Results**   * A formal partnership has been established between USS and the CBOs to carry future advocacy for women's rights at the local level. * USS has gained the capacity to do right based advocacy to promote gender equality at the local level through organising a dialogue. * USS has gained the capacity to do right based advocacy to promote gender equality at the national level through organising policy dialogue. |

**The strategy of intervention and the description of activities:**

This project's background is that there is a violation of women rights in Shaghata that the USS and Bandhab have experienced. Many women are not aware of their rights and are therefore not able to stand up for themselves. Therefore, the pivot of this project is to create awareness among both right holders and duty bearers about women's rights and equip them with necessary resources. The intervention is planned to be implemented in three years and will be divided into three stages.

***Immediate Objective I****:* *In the three Union of Shaghata Upazila, 750 marginalised women are organised in thirty self-help groups (SHG) and are more aware of their rights, have income-generating skills and have organisational skills.*

In the first stage of the intervention, 750 women will be organised in 3x10=30 SHGs. The women will meet weekly, where there will be discussions on selected issues.  Relevant issues for discussion can be related to legal aid, women's right, access to health and welfare schemes from the Union Parishad etc. A five member executive committee will be elected in each SHG. The members of the executive committee will receive training on Organisational Development, Self-saving, and Income Generating Activities and share in their own SHGs. Through different training women in the SHGs will become aware of their rights and gain more capacity on an individual and collective level.

**Activities**

***Recruitment and training CDOs:***  As first step, six part-time community development organisers (CDO) will be hired to facilitate the SHGs. The intervention will prioritise hiring female CDOs or someone who has experience in relevant projects. The CDOs will receive training on women's rights, right based advocacy and guidelines on forming SHGs.

***Appointment of a short-term external Consultant:*** *A short-term consultant will be hired with a strong profile in the right-based approach and advocacy****-***related work. The consultant's activities include counselling and training USS staff to build up USS capacity to do advocacy at the national level.

***Preparatory Seminar and Workshop*:** At project start up, Bandhab and USS will conduct a joint preparatory seminar and workshop for the newly recruited project staffs. The focus will be on the modalities of forming SHGs, right based approach, monitoring and evaluation of SHGs and CBO, women's rights, Income Generating Activities, work planning, budgeting etc. Two Bandhab volunteers will participate in the seminar and be responsible for facilitating some of the training sessions. After the workshop, a detailed joint action plan for the intervention will be developed and agreed upon. The action plan will set the line for the work throughout the intervention, including deadlines and assigning responsible people.

***Formation of self-help groups:*** In the first stage of the intervention, 750 women will be organised in 30 SHGs with 10 in each Union. Each group will consist of approximately 25 members. The trained CDOs will search and select members in the community who fit the target group's criteria and then form the groups. An inauguration ceremony will be held for each group where the marginalised community leaders' families will be invited. This is to avoid conflict in the future and adopt an inclusive approach where the community will also feel part of the process. Once the groups are formed the CDOs will supervise the groups through the weekly meetings.

***Awareness and capacity development trainings for the SHGs***

1. *Awareness training on Women Rights:* The women will meet every week where there will be discussions on selected issues facilitated by the CDOs. After a need based assessment of the members, a list of priority issues will be chosen. The Project Coordinator will equip the CDOs with the necessary knowledge on the right based issues who will share it with the members during their regular weekly meetings. Further topics will be selected based on discussion within the partners, external consultant and with advice from the local women's welfare department. These issues will be within the area of legal aid, women's right, access to health and welfare schemes from the Union Parishad etc. where the women lack knowledge.
2. *Training on the Self-Saving Program:* The SHG members will receive training on the self-saving program from the CDOs to gain awareness of the saving program's opportunities. In past projects, we experienced that the program creates ownership of the members in their group. The saved money is used for individual and collective needs. It also enables democratic practice among the beneficiaries.
3. *Income Generating Activities (IGA):* Relevant training on IGA will be chosen along the way depending on the beneficiaries' needs and local market demand. Sewing and tailoring will be provided to selected group members. One member from each group will be selected for the training and later participants would share their knowledge with interested group members in the SHGs. This will be implemented in supervision of the CDOs. Furthermore, the local government's women welfare department and agricultural department have multiple IGA trainings suitable for women but they do not have the capacity to reach out to marginalised women. USS will connect the SHGs with the departments to utilise existing schemes. Available training includes seasonal food production, food processing, vegetable production at yard, livestock and poultry raising, handicrafts crafts production with wood, bamboo, paper, etc.
4. *Training on Organizational Development:* To ensure the sustainability of the SHGs, five elected executive group members will be elected from each group and they will receive training on organisational development. Along with the practical training in the groups, this will build up their organisational knowledge and the capacity to manage the SHGs on their own after the end of the project.

Through the weekly meetings, the beneficiaries will become aware of their rights, gain skills and gain more control over their economic resources. The intervention will support and supervise the SHGs for three years. According to USS' and Bandhab's experience, this period is sufficient to form, equip and nurture the groups. In the first one and half year, six CDO will supervise 6x5=30 groups. By this time, the groups should be able to support themselves with minimum supervision. After that, the number of CDOs will be reduced to 3 and the groups with weaker performance will be supervised in the later stages. The performance of the groups will be measured by the attendance of the members, discussed issues; received training and weekly savings. This will be centrally documented via SMS or an app. An end line survey will be done to evaluate the capacity and progress of the SHGs.

***Immediate Objective II:*** *In the three Unions of Shaghata Upazila, the 30 SHGs are arranged in the form of CBOs and gain the capacity to do advocacy and promote women's rights.*

After one and a half years, the SHGs will be more self-sufficient. At this point, the focus will be shifted towards the formation of the CBOs. The USS's head office is in the vicinity of all three unions where the CBOs will be formed. This will be an advantage for both parties to work together closely in the long run. The 30 SHGs in this stage are planned to be organised into three CBOs according to respective unions through an election. Each CBO will represent at least 250 women/10 groups and in total 750 female beneficiaries, who would engage as volunteers. A seven-member executive committee will be formed for each CBO. One CBO will represent ten SHGs. To increase the capacity of the CBO, the executive members will receive training on voting rights, right based advocacy, advocacy based campaigning, leadership, organisational development, networking and conflict management. All the activities are planned to be implemented in the second half of the intervention (18 months). In this way, the women will be organised in the form of community-based organisation through a democratic practice and will gain the capacity to do right based advocacy in the three unions of Shaghata Upazila and USS.

The intervention has a strategy to promote active citizenship through the formation of the CBOs and build its capacity to influence the Union Parishads (UP). The UP is the lowest tier of the political and public administration.  UP has limited capacity to reach out to all the citizens; this creates a communication gap between the right holder and duty bearers. The project aims to minimise that gap by building a network including the CBOs, the respective UP, and relevant departments of the local UP, for example the women's welfare department and social welfare department.

**Activities:**

***CBO Election Commission:*** An election commission will be formed with USS participation, civil society representatives, and local government representatives. This is to make sure that legal and moral duty bearers are included in the process and also to make the election transparent and acceptable. Prior to that, discussions would be held in the SHGs on the need, importance and different aspects of the election in the weekly meetings. After that, the commission will call for candidates for the election. A seven member executive committee (7x3=21) will be formed for each CBO in the elected members' participation.

***Capacity development trainings for the CBOs***

a. *Strategic workshop & Capacity building seminar for CBOs:* After the election 21 executive committee (EC) members will get four-day training on leadership, networking, organisational development, conflict management and right based advocacy. This is to develop capacity for the CBOs to run independently. After the training, under the EC leadership, with guidance from USS and reflection from the members, a bylaw for the CBOs will be finalised for the future. Bandhab and USS will jointly organise the workshop and seminar. Two Bandhab volunteers' will participate in the seminar as a key facilitator and discuss the status of the project and plan the work ahead

b. *Training on Advocacy and Advocacy campaign for CBO***:** A hands-on training will be provided to the CBOs on advocacy and advocacy campaigns by USS. The external consultant will prepare a training manual for right based advocacy in a simple language easy to understand by the members of the CBOs. The members will learn how to identify a problem using a "problem tree" and resolve it through an advocacy based campaign. The goal is to build capacity for the CBO to plan an advocacy based campaign and promote gender equality.

***Advocacy campaign:*** After the training, the CBO will plan to carry out a right based advocacy campaign in three unions of Shaghata. Each CBO will identify a barrier to gender equality in their respective Union. The CBOs will reach out to the relevant Union Parishad institutions, like minded stakeholders and motivate them to join the campaign.  USS will assist the CBOs in the campaign. The campaign process is used to build up the capacity of the CBOs so that they can continue doing advocacy even after the end of the project.

Sustainability: While phasing out, the CBOs will apply for official registration under the Union Parishad women's welfare/social welfare department as a community based organisation. The CBOs can be registered if: they have a bylaw, have a seven-member elected executive committee, have the capacity to do bookkeeping and have the capacity to develop and carry out a planned activity. In this way the CBOs will get financial support and access to other benefits from Union Parishad. This will make the CBO more sustainable, independent and also provide legitimacy in the community.

***Immediate Objective III:*** *The local partner USS has gained the capacity to lead right based advocacy and promote gender equality at the national and local levels in collaboration with the CBOs.*

Simultaneously with the implementation of the first two objectives, through participating and organising relevant workshops, seminars and advocacy activities, USS will increase its capacity in the area of right based advocacy and gender inequality. This stage is planned to be implemented in the last six months of the intervention through the following activities.

**Activities**

***MoU between USS and CBO:*** will be signed to advocate for women's rights at the local level in the future. In the MOU, USS and CBO will set a clear outline and expectation of future cooperation to do advocacy. It will allow the CBO to utilise USS's networks and training facilities.

***Advocacy Dialogue at the local level:*** USS, together with the CBOs, will organise an advocacy dialogue at the local level. Political leaders from three unions, local government representatives, representatives from women, agriculture and social welfare departments, representatives from CBOs and USS will participate in the event. Different perspectives and reflections of the participants on the project's success, limitation and potential will be documented and shared at the national level. Beside knowledge sharing, USS and CBO will also seek future support from the Union Parishad in the event to do advocacy.

***Advocacy Dialogue at the national level:*** Finally, USS and Bandhab will organise an advocacy and policy dialogue at the national level *with Bureaucrats and Policymakers*. The idea is to include the result and learning from the local level and share it at the national level. Bureaucrats from different ministries and policymakers from the national level will participate in the dialogue. Insights of the intervention and its relevance to the government's gender policy will be discussed in the event. To building up CBOs capacity, 3x3=9 CBO members will also participate in the dialogue to create a link between the target group and the decision makers. After the event, the project's learning will be shared in print, electronic and social media, both in Denmark and Bangladesh. This activity is primarily focused on building up additional capacity for USS to do advocacy in the national level. One Bandhab volunteer will join the dialogue as facilitator, participant, and write an evaluation report of the intervention as part of internal monitoring and evaluation activities.

The timeline of the intervention can be considered ambitious. However, based on USS's and Bandhab's experiences and the allocation of resources in the intervention, the partners find it feasible to reach the objectives and implement the activities within the planned budget and timeframe. The timeline was set based on capacity building and experiences acquired from past projects.

**Roles and responsibility:**  **The project intervention team**

The roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined between Bandhab and USS through an MoU upon the application's approval. USS will be in charge of implementing the project. USS will also be responsible for recruiting project staff, regular progress monitoring and submitting quarterly and annual financial and narrative reports to Bandhab. Whereas, Bandhab will be overall responsible for coordinating the project, monitoring and analysing the project implementation based on the quarterly and annual narrative and financial reports, facilitating the transfer of project funds to USS, and supporting the development of an M&E system for the project. Bandhab will further support the implementation through field visits.

On Behalf Of Bandhab:

*Project Manager:* Afif Hossain will manage the project. He is from Bangladesh and has been a member of the Bandhab board, steering committee and coordinated projects for Bandhab. He has knowledge of the project area, has also participated and led several seminars and workshops. Afif graduated from Roskilde University (RUC) in Social Entrepreneurship and Management. He wrote his master thesis on women's empowerment in Bangladesh.

*Monitoring and evaluation coordinator:* Demay Zabitoglu has also graduated from RUC in Global Studies and International Development. She has experience promoting gender equality through educational programs, youth clubs, and women entrepreneurial groups to help women and girls realise their potential while reducing poverty and developing the local community.

Upon approval of the project, Bandhab will recruite two more volunteers in the project team. From Bandhab board the chairperson Mai Fanøe (Masters in Public Health) and treasurer Johan Alexander Degn (B.Sc. International Business) will follow up and support the intervention with relevant competencies.

On Behalf Of USS:

1. *USS Project Coordinator:* Will be responsible for day to day coordination of the project and setting the strategic framework, reporting to Bandhab, contact stakeholders and authorities, preparing and carrying out an advocacy strategy to promote gender equality, responsible for inputs concerning advocacy, RBA, formation of SHG, formation of CBO and dialogue at the local and national level.
2. *USS executive director (partial employment):* will be responsible for the overall project implementation, M&E and supervision, recruitment and training of project staff, networking and contacting stakeholders. Further, the USS executive director will cooperate with the project coordinator on planning and carrying out the project activities.
3. *Community development organiser (six):*  will be responsible for group formation, provide training and supervise the groups, carry out surveys and collect data for monitoring and evaluation.
4. *Short-term External consultant:* will be hired with a high profile in right based approach, right based advocacy and women's rights. S/he would be one of the key facilitators in the preparatory workshop and seminar, the strategic workshop & capacity building seminar and advocacy dialogue at the local and national levels. Further s/he will consult USS in preparing training manuals, professional discussion and evaluation of the project. Including the activities and for its preparation, it is expected that the person will work at the USS head office one month full time each year (1x3= 3months).

**Monitoring and evaluation strategy:**

The experiences gained during the partnership intervention will be documented in the quarterly progress reports, annual report and final report. There will also be a fortnightly update online meeting between the responsible Bandhab and USS project team.

1. A system/app will be developed through which the weekly activities in the SHGs will be documented. Bandhab will develop the system; the CDO's will collect the weekly data.
2. The Most Significant Change method will be used for assessing the qualitative change during and after the partnership intervention period with stories describing the results and impact
3. USS will carry out a baseline and end-line survey to assess and compare the quantitative and qualitative changes resulting from the intervention.
4. Yearly monitoring visits by Bandhab are planned and will be combined with other field activities such as workshops, seminars and advocacy dialogue.
5. The project results will be shared with practitioners, politicians and bureaucrats at the national level in a policy dialogue event at the end of the project. The dialogue event's outcome will be documented and published through a separate report in the last quarter of the project.
6. USS will prepare a report of the results achieved during project implementation, including qualitative and quantitative results.
7. At the end of the project, the external consultant will prepare an evaluation report to document the changes in the life of the beneficiaries and the outcome of the intervention and shared with the partners and CISU.

## 4. Information work in Denmark

As a part of information work in Denmark, Bandhab is planning to organise an event and share the learning from the intervention combined with a cultural event. A short video documentary will be developed regarding GonoKendra's in Bangladesh. Cultural events are a way to inform local Danish citizens about Bandhab's work, and the video documentary can visualise the intervention as a whole. The documentary will be shared online and in different events organised by Bandhab in future.