

ACHIEVEMENT REPORT



**Strengthening National Capacities to
Develop and Promote Visual Arts
(Photography) in Bangladesh:
Contributing to Sustainable Development**



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Photos: © UNESCO, Prito Reza Production

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Message

Bangladesh was among the first countries who ratified the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Since ratification in 2007, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and affiliated government and non-government institutions and entities have been implementing the 2005 Convention which focuses on the arts, diverse cultural expressions, artistic products, and cultural and creative industries. Meanwhile, certain aspects of the implementation of the Convention can benefit from reinforcement and strengthening.

Photography, as a visual arts industry and thus falling within the scope of the 2005 Convention, plays a growingly important role and with the emergence of digital media, photography has become a part of many people's daily life. Bangladesh is home to a vibrant photography sector with a large and diverse range of amateur and professional photographers.

Supporting and promoting Bangladesh's photography sector as a cultural and creative visual arts industry that contributes to the sustainable development of Bangladesh, the UNESCO Office in Dhaka implemented the project *"Strengthening National Capacities to Develop and Promote Visual Arts (Photography) in Bangladesh: Contributing to Sustainable Development"* with generous funding support from the Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT) and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the EMK Center, the National Museum of Bangladesh, and other stakeholders over the course of 2019.

The project successfully built the capacity of and equipped photographers with tools and knowledge that enhances their work and the UNESCO 2005 Convention provided the framework and umbrella for activities carried out. Conducted

capacity-building Master Classes brought together and strengthened the capacity of 76 Bangladeshi photographers from diverse backgrounds who are working in different fields of photography.

Further, leveraging UNESCO's convening power, UNESCO facilitated a policy dialogue which provided a neutral platform and facilitated dialogue between photographers, cultural industries' stakeholders, and policymakers on the role and importance of photography in Bangladesh as a culture and creative industry, as well as its contribution to society and sustainable development at large.

Dedicated public outreach and engagement activities, including a photography competition, a photography exhibition, and public talks under the theme "Colors of Bangladesh" allowed Bangladeshi photographers and the public to come together, to discuss photography, as well as to learn about Bangladesh's vibrant photography sector and its contribution as a cultural and creative sector supporting the sustainable development of Bangladesh.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for enabling this project through their financial support, as well as to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh, to the Bangladesh National Museum, to the EMK Center, as well as to Prito Reza Production for their generous contributions and collaboration to accomplish the project successfully.

I would also like to thank the many photographers and stakeholders of the photography sector for participating in and contributing to project activities, as well as for their valuable contributions making photography an important cultural and creative industry in Bangladesh.

Beatrice Kaldun

Head of Office and UNESCO
Representative to Bangladesh



1 Project Background

Implemented over the course of 2019, the project *“Strengthening National Capacities to Develop and Promote Visual Arts (Photography) in Bangladesh: Contributing to Sustainable Development”* actively supported and promoted Bangladesh’s visual arts industries, particularly its photography sector, and thereby enhanced awareness about Bangladesh’s culture sector and its contribution to the sustainable development of the country.

Under the umbrella of the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which Bangladesh ratified in 2007, as well as generously supported by the Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT), the UNESCO Office in Dhaka implemented the project in close collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the National Museum of Bangladesh, the EMK Center, Prito Reza Production, and a wide range of stakeholders.

Bangladesh was among the first countries who had ratified the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, expressing the commitment of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, including of its affiliated institutions and entities, to strengthen the creation, production, distribution, dissemination, access to and enjoyment of cultural expressions – conveyed by cultural activities, goods and services, including photography. Since the ratification, the Government of Bangladesh continues placing great efforts in implementing the

Convention and actively supports culture and creative industries in Bangladesh.

In line with the principles of the 2005 Convention, the implemented UNESCO project provided timely support to reinforce Government efforts and to strengthen Bangladesh’s cultural and creative industries, particularly its visual arts industries.

The project further contributed to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including by contributing to SDG 8.3 *“Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services”*.



On 18 April 2019, the Ministry of Finance (ERD), the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO officially signed off and launched the project.

2 Project Overview

2.1 Project Objectives

The project aimed to support the development of Bangladesh's photography sector as a visual arts industry by building stakeholder capacity, by enhancing knowledge, by sensitizing stakeholders on the 2005 Convention, as well as by providing concrete tools to photographers and policymakers.

Project objectives included the following:

	Build Capacity & Enhance Stakeholder Knowledge In the context of the 2005 Convention, building capacity and enhancing the understanding of stakeholders of photography as an important culture and creative industry in Bangladesh. Specifically, building capacity of photographers and other stakeholders in areas related to photo-entrepreneurship and photography as a sustainable livelihood.
	Convene Stakeholders Providing a neutral platform and facilitating dialogue between photographers, industry stakeholders, and policymakers on the role and importance of photography in Bangladesh as a culture and creative industry, including its contribution to society and to the sustainable development of the country.
	Sensitize Stakeholders Sensitizing national stakeholders and photographers about the importance and significance of photography as a culture and creative industry in Bangladesh. Sensitizing stakeholders about the 2005 Convention, its background, its purpose and benefits, as well as obligations for the Government following the ratification of the Convention.
	Provide Tools for Photographers Supporting photographers in their profession and work by providing concrete tools that are of relevance to them. Tools include learning opportunities, legal frameworks, ways to seek financial support, as well as professional networking opportunities.

2.2 Project Activities at a Glance

In pursuit of defined and mutually agreed objectives of the project, four sets of activities were implemented over the course of 2019:

1. [Assessment and Situation Analysis of Bangladesh's photography sector.](#)
2. [Photography Capacity-building Master Classes for Photographers](#)
3. [Policy Round-Table Discussion](#)
4. [Photography Competition, Exhibition and Public Talks](#)

The initial assessment and situation analysis of Bangladesh's photography sector as a cultural and creative industry served as a baseline for activities and informed about the needs and priorities of Bangladesh's photographers (see 3.1).

Targeted capacity-building "Master Classes" were carried out by national and international experts and reinforced the capacity of 76 selected

photographers from diverse backgrounds within identified priority areas (see 3.2).

A policy round-table discussion with the participation of Government stakeholders, senior photographers, and other stakeholders of the photography industry allowed to identify responsibilities of the different stakeholders and actors in pursuit of the implementation of the 2005 Convention as well as allowed to discuss Bangladesh's cultural policy and its support to the visual arts and photography industry (see 3.3).

To create awareness among the public and the wider photography sector about the 2005 Convention, to promote photography as a visual art industry that is a part of the cultural and creative industries of Bangladesh, as well as to support emerging photographers in their work, a photography competition, exhibition and public talks were conducted under the theme "COLORS OF BANGLADESH" (see 3.4).

Activity Overview

Assessment and Situation Analysis of Bangladesh's Photography Sector

Photography Capacity-Building Master Classes for Photographers

Policy Round-Table Discussion

Awareness Raising Photography Competition, Exhibition, and Public Talks

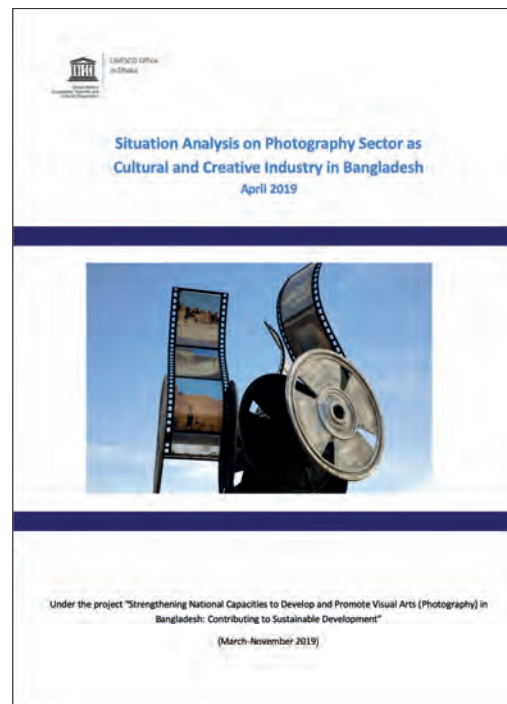
3 Summary of Activities

3.1 Assessment and Situation Analysis of Bangladesh's Photography Sector

An initial assessment and situation analysis of Bangladesh's photography sector as a cultural and creative industry was carried out and served as a baseline for interventions implemented under the umbrella of the project. The comprehensive assessment and situation analysis was conducted by a national expert and identified the status and impact of the national photography sector, including its shortcomings and challenges.

As part of the assessment, a series of stakeholder interviews and a desk review of secondary literature on Bangladesh's photography sector were conducted. Draft findings were shared and validated by industry experts.

The comprehensive assessment and situation analysis, which was conducted by a national expert, provides a comprehensive and useful updated overview of the photography sector and industry, in particular on existing policies, legislation, educational and training opportunities, both within the formal and informal education system, educational provision for labour market match, as well as good practices in the field of protection, promotion and development of creative industries with a focus on the photography industry in Bangladesh.



Through the collection of statistical data, the assessment identified the impact of the photography industry on the economic and the sustainable development of Bangladesh.

3.2 Photography Capacity-Building Master Classes for Bangladeshi Photographers

Responding to the identified need to strengthen photographers' skills in areas of photography as a sustainable livelihood and on the 2005 Convention as a platform and tool for photographers, three dedicated capacity-building Master Classes were conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Center.

With facilitation support from one national male and one international female photographer and industry expert, 76 male and female Bangladeshi photographers (41% freelance photographers, 33% staff photographers and 26% students) participated in the hands-on and engaging Master Classes, which allowed participants to gain hands-on knowledge, learn about the 2005 Convention as a tool for photographers, exchange and share lessons learnt, as well as reinforce their professional network.

Master Classes Session Topics:

- » Photography as a cultural and creative industry contributing to sustainable development
- » The 2005 Convention as a tool for photographers and policymakers
- » Entrepreneurial aspects of photography
- » Gender and Photography
- » Photography and Bangladesh's cultural policy
- » Aspects of being a professional artist

The Master Classes brought together a diverse group of photographers and enhanced their knowledge on important non-technical aspects of photography. Participating photographers were selected from different sectors and from different backgrounds, including from youth-based photography clubs, staff photographers, and photography-based freelance entrepreneurs.

During the Master Classes photographers were not only introduced to the 2005 Convention and the photography industry's role in light of the Convention, but participating photographers learned, shared, and exchanged views on important aspects of the Bangladeshi photography sector and industry, including what it means to be a photographer in Bangladesh.



What I think the convention did to me is, it actually gave me a vision. There are possibilities, and if I get stuck anywhere, I know where to seek help.

Nazifa Tabassum Lamiya, Event and Product Photographer and Student at IBA Dhaka University, Participant at Capacity-Building Master Classes.



Trainers of Master Classes

The UNESCO Capacity-Building Master Classes were facilitated by two senior photographers and photography industry experts:



Prito Reza

BANGLADESH

Muhammed Zahid Reza, widely known as Prito Reza, is a Bangladeshi photographer and photography-based entrepreneur, a director, a TV personality, a public speaker and a celebrity. He is the founder of Wedding Diary and Prito Reza Production, and is considered as the pioneer in the modern wedding photography industry of Bangladesh.



I can see the light because this is the very first time in my career that I am sitting on the same table with policy makers and that I am able to suggest to them a few important points that we are feeling as photographers. During the Master Class, we brought together 76 photographers from different sectors and different genres from different parts of the country and discussed problems as well as solutions. *(Prito Reza, October 2019)*



Wawi Navarroza

PHILIPPINES

Wawi Navarroza is a Filipino photographer and contemporary artist mostly identified for her works using photography, recently following a cycle of work depicting notions of looking at contemporary landscape seen from an experiential, self-reflexive point of view.



I feel we did something crucial in Dhaka, the first of many initiatives I hope. The UNESCO Master Classes we did was the first to bring to light the 2005 Convention and how it practically relates to Photography as profession – whether one is a photojournalist, wedding photographer, or an artist using photography. I believe this is a big step in recognizing/legitimizing the importance of professional photographers to Culture and Economy. *(Wawi Navarroza, October 2019)*

Master Classes Participant Overview

The UNESCO Capacity-Building Master Classes were attended by a large range of amateur and professional photographers from diverse backgrounds who are working in different fields of photography:

Master Classes Participants Overview				
Master Classes Participants	Freelance Photographers	Staff Photographers	Students	Total
Master Classes Day 1	13	14	11	38
Master Classes Day 2	12	17	9	38
Total Participants	25	31	20	76

3.3 Policy Round-Table Discussion on Bangladesh's Photography Industry

A policy round-table discussion engaging Government and other relevant photography stakeholders allowed for an open duty bearers and right holders dialogue on photography as a cultural and creative industry in Bangladesh.

The implementation of the 2005 Convention and national cultural policy were discussed and steps, actions, and responsibilities related to the development and promotion of the institutional infrastructure and ecosystem of photography in Bangladesh were jointly discussed.

The 2005 Convention provided the umbrella for the policy dialogue. The text of the Convention as well as the Operational Guidelines and case studies from other countries provided concrete tools to photographers and policymakers, and showcased ways to promote and develop institutional frameworks in support of visual art and photography industries.

More than 30 stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Photographers, Curators, Stock Agencies, Journalists, Academia, CSO, and camera brand representatives actively participated in the discussions that were co-chaired and jointly facilitated by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and UNESCO.

Discussions included the role of photography as a creative industry under the 2005 Convention including its societal role and economic value of Bangladesh's photography industry, as well as ways for all stakeholders, including Government, to contribute to its continued success.

The policy round-table discussion not only strengthened the relationship between the Government and the photography sector, but it brought together stakeholders and facilitated dialogue on pertinent issues, possible solutions, and concrete steps of the different actors for the better development of photography in Bangladesh.



3.4 Public Awareness-Raising and Outreach Photography Competition and Exhibition



Promoting Bangladesh’s photography industry as a visual art, as a cultural and creative industry, as well as raising awareness of the industry as a driver for sustainable development, a photography competition, a photography exhibition, as well as three public talks were organized within the framework of this project.

Photography Competition & Exhibition

Under the theme “COLORS OF BANGLADESH”, in close cooperation with the Bangladesh National Museum, Prito Production, and other partners, UNESCO provided professional and amateur photographers living in Bangladesh with the opportunity to submit their favorite photos capturing the Colors of Bangladesh to the photography competition.



A diverse panel of national and international expert judges reviewed the more than 17,000 submissions from male and female photographers (40 % from outside Dhaka) and chose a selection of 120 photographs which were displayed during a 3-day photography exhibition at the Bangladesh National Museum.



Key Facts

- 17,000+ Submissions
- 1,200+ Participating Photographers
- 120 Photos selected & displayed



On the third day of the exhibition the winners of the photography competition were awarded by the panel of expert judges and UNESCO, in front of a large audience of representatives of Bangladesh’s photography community, the Government, and civil society.

The photography competition and exhibition not only allowed Bangladesh’s photographers to come together and to have a platform to display and discuss photography, but it allowed to raise awareness among the public about the vibrant photography sector and the culture of image-making in Bangladesh as a cultural and creative sector.

3.5 Public Awareness-Raising and Outreach Public Talks

Public talks and panel discussions on each of the three days of the photography exhibition on topics including “Creative Value of a Photographer”, “Photography and Copyright”, and “How to judge a photograph” allowed Bangladeshi photographers, experts, and the public to come together, to discuss photography, as well as to learn about Bangladesh’s vibrant photography sector and its contribution as a cultural and creative sector to Bangladesh’s society and its sustainable development in light of the 2005 Convention.



Public Talk 1: Creative Value of a Photographer

- Photography as an art
- The creative value of a photographer
- Moral aspects of photography

Public Talk 2: Photography and Copyright

- Copyright in the photography industry
- Ways to protect copyright as a photographer
- International copyright laws

Public Talk 3: How to judge a photograph

- Aspects of judging
- What is a “good” photograph
- Who is judging?



“

Because of today’s event, we, the young generation of photographers in Bangladesh, are getting a platform to exchange views and to learn how to present themselves as photographers in the market professionally. We learn how to deal with official paperwork as a photographer which allows us to respond to the demand for professional photography in Bangladesh.

Nurun Nahar Nargis, Ministry of Health Staff Photographer, Participant at Capacity-Building Master Classes.



4 Project Impact

Activities implemented under the project successfully supported Bangladesh's photography sector as a cultural and creative industry that is contributing to the sustainable development of Bangladesh.

Well received by national authorities and by Bangladesh's photography community and sector, the project and its activities created lasting impact and successfully raised awareness about the 2005 Convention as a relevant mechanisms supporting photography as a cultural and creative industry, built capacity among photographers, instigated dialogue between Government and the photography community, as well as raised awareness among the public about photography as a visual arts industry and its contribution to society and the sustainable development of the country.

The impact of the project included:

- » **Sensitized stakeholders on the 2005 Convention:** Sensitized a diverse group of stakeholders on the 2005 Convention, its aim, purpose, obligations for Governments who have ratified the Convention, as well on concrete tools of the Convention that are available to photographers and policymakers.
- » **Built Capacity & Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge:** Built capacity and enhanced the capacity of photographers in areas of photo-entrepreneurship, photography as a sustainable livelihood, photography and its contribution to society and to sustainable development, as well as photography as a cultural and creative industry.
- » **Convened Government and Civil Society Stakeholders:** Provided a neutral platform and facilitated dialogue between photographers, industry stakeholders, and policymakers on the role and importance of photography in Bangladesh as a culture and creative industry, as well as its contribution to society and sustainable development.
- » **Raised Awareness about Photography among the Public:** Raised awareness among the public about the vibrant photography sector and the culture of image-making in Bangladesh, including as a culture and creative sector contributing to society and the sustainable development of the country.
- » **Provided tools for photographers:** Supported photographers in their profession and work by providing them with concrete tools including learning opportunities, knowledge about the 2005 Convention and other relevant national and international legal frameworks, ways to seek financial support, as well as by providing professional networking opportunities within and outside the photography community.

“

There's a window between the photographers and the policymakers. In the focus group discussions, we told you, that these are the problems we have identified, and these are the solution we're looking into. Maybe UNESCO could, you know, bring them on the table with Government for a dialogue.

Redwan Ahmed, Mutli-Platform Journalist, Participant at Capacity-Building Master Classes.



5 Donor and Project Partners

The project was generously funded by the Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT). To ensure ownership and sustainability of the project, UNESCO worked directly with focal persons at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs as well as with other national and international partners and stakeholders which have been instrumental to the success of the project activities. International and national stakeholders and partners included:


International

DONOR	<p>The Republic of Korea</p>  <p>Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism Republic of Korea</p> <p>The Republic of Korea is a strong supporter of UNESCO, including in the promotion of the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. With funding support from the Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT), UNESCO implemented the project in pursuit of promoting Bangladesh’s visual arts industry, particularly its photography sector.</p>
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National

PROJECT PARTNER	<p>Ministry of Cultural Affairs</p>  <p>Ministry of Cultural Affairs</p> <p>The Ministry of Cultural Affairs is the national authority dedicated to enhancing and enriching the nation’s intellect through preservation, research, development and promotion of native culture, history, and heritage, as well as the spirit of the liberation war and contemporary arts, including photography, and literature of Bangladesh.</p>
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PROJECT PARTNER	<p>Bangladesh National Museum</p>  <p>The Bangladesh National Museum is Bangladesh’s national museum and is devoted to archaeology, classical, decorative and contemporary art, history, natural history, ethnography and world civilization. The Bangladesh National Museum hosted the Photography Exhibition of the project.</p>
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PROJECT PARTNER	<p>Edward M Kennedy Center - EMK Center</p>  <p>Supporting both visual and performing artists, the EMK center, provides a venue and hosts pop-up galleries, curated shows, concerts, dance recitals, performances, and plays, contributing to Bangladesh’s vibrant cultural and entrepreneurial scene.</p>
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1 Policy Dialogue
with Civil Society

3 Capacity-Building
Master Classes for
Photographers

3 Public Talks on
Photography

5 International and
National Experts
Engaged

76 Bangladeshi
Professionals
Trained

1400+ Bangladeshi
Photographers
Engaged

The UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: *Recognizing that culture can no longer be just a by-product of development, but rather the mainspring for sustainable development.*



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