

OPEN CALL

WOW—Women of the World—Grants

WOW Bangladesh Chapters 2026

Guidelines

Grants of up to £23,000 are available to institutions, organisations, and registered groups of artists and cultural practitioners in the cities of Chattogram, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet to host, curate, produce and present a WOW Bangladesh Chapter event in 2026.

The British Council invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from institutions, organisations, and registered groups of artists and cultural practitioners based in the cities of Chattogram, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet to host, curate, produce and present a day-long WOW Bangladesh Chapter event between 1 January to 30 August 2026.

Grants of up to £23,000 in equivalent local currency are available.

The open call for EOIs is now open.

Deadline: 16 November 2025 (23:59:59 Bangladesh Standard Time)

What is WOW - Women of the World?

The WOW Foundation exists to build, convene and sustain a global movement that believes a gender equal world is desirable, possible and urgently required.

WOW - Women of the World was founded by Jude Kelly in 2010, when the first WOW Festival took place at Southbank Centre. Since then, WOW Festivals celebrating women and girls, and taking a frank look at the obstacles they face, have taken place across the globe, reaching more than two million people.

Through festivals, events, schools' programmes and more, WOW challenges the belief that gender equality has already been achieved – and hopes to join the dots between people, movements and ideas to change the world.

WOW Programme in South Asia:

The British Council's work in South Asia regarding gender aims to deliver the following outcomes:

1. Raising awareness and changing perceptions: Women, girls, men and boys positively change their perceptions and attitudes towards gender norms.
2. Building capacity and skills: Arts organisations and creative professionals have increased skills and capacity to tackle gender issues.
3. Voice and Platforms: Women and girls are able to contribute to all aspects of life, including civic engagement and artistic expression.
4. Allies and Partnerships: An increased number of organisations work together to promote gender equality.

Interested institutions, organisations and groups are encouraged to engage in their EOIs with the intricacies, counterarguments, and active questions of the local, discursive traditions of how experiences of society are, should, or should not be determined by gender in Bangladesh through one or more of the following perspectives:

- Film, Moving Image and Media Aesthetics
- Hyperobject meets hyperobject: Gender and the climate emergency
- STE(A)M: Science, Technology, (Arts), Engineering & Maths

WOW Bangladesh Chapter event concepts that centre artistic and/or cultural work and practices that connect to the diverse people, movements and ideas in the arenas of arts, culture and media that are engaged with the urgent global challenge of gender inequality are welcomed. Proposals that engage with the work of recent British Council grantees and partners in either Bangladesh or the UK who demonstrate a track record of engagement with these themes are of particular interest. For information about recent grant initiatives and programmes involving grantees from the UK and Bangladesh, please visit:

- **Disability Arts: Redefining Empowerment 2019-2024**
<https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/our-work-disability-arts>
- **WOW Festival 2023 Bangladesh**
<https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/programmes/arts/wow-2023>
- **International Collaboration Grants 2024**
<https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/programmes/arts/international-collaboration-grants>
- **Connections Through Culture 2024**
<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/corporates/british-council-announces-connections-through-culture-grant-recipients-1070851>
- **Climate Futures: South Asia 2025**
<https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/programmes/arts/climate-futures-south-asia>
- **Connections Through Culture 2025**
<https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/programmes/arts/connections-through-culture-grantee-2025>
- **WOW Bangladesh Commissions 2025**
<https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/open-call-wow-bangladesh-commissions-2025>

Information for applicants

Key Dates

- 31 October 2025 – Applications open
- 16 November 2025 (23:59:59 Bangladesh Standard Time) – Application deadline
- First week of December 2025 – Notification of decisions
- 10 December 2025 – Agreements signed and completed
- After 1 January 2026 – Projects start from
- Before 30 September 2026 – Projects and project reporting completed

What can the grant be used for?

The grants will support institutions, organisations, and registered groups of artists and cultural practitioners based in any one of the following cities in Bangladesh: Chattogram, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet to host, curate, produce and present a day-long WOW Bangladesh Chapter event between 1 January to 30 August 2026.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants:
 - Applicants should be institutions, organisations, and registered groups of artists and cultural practitioners based in any one of the following cities in Bangladesh: Chattogram, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet.
 - The British Council expects the entity applying to have the necessary registration/s needed to comply with legal and/or tax provisions in the country in which they are based e.g. this could be a sole trader or an individual operating as a company with the associated registrations.
 - We welcome applications from both new and returning applicants.
 - The capacity and capability to produce and present work in Bangladesh between 1 January to 30 August 2026 about gender in society is central to this award.
- Proposals:
 - Proposals to produce music albums, or to produce films are not eligible for this grant.
 - Proposals to conduct research visits, or to develop ideas that will not be produced and presented in Bangladesh before 30 September 2026 are not eligible for this grant.

How to Apply

- Please complete the *'Expression of Interest'* form.
- Please complete the *'Budget and Activity Timeline'* template
- Once completed, please save both of the above files as PDF versions and email them to Arts.Bangladesh@britishcouncil.org with "EOI: WOW Bangladesh Chapters 2026" in the subject-line
- The deadline for applications is 11:59 p.m. Bangladesh Standard Time on 16 November 2025.

Assessment Criteria:

All applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weighting:

Evaluation criteria	Description	Weighting
Quality and artistic/creative approach	• The Chapter event proposal demonstrates strong curatorial insight in response to one or more of the following themes: ◦ Film, Moving Image and Media Aesthetics. ◦ Hyper object meets hyper object: Gender and the climate emergency. ◦ STE(A)M: Science, Technology, (Arts), Engineering & Maths. • The Chapter event proposal demonstrates applicants' previous track record of delivering and developing high quality work in Bangladesh.	20%
Feasibility and project management	• The Chapter event proposal is realistic, well-planned, and achievable within the given timeline. • The budget is clearly justified and equitably distributed between organisers, artists, speakers and all other contributors. • Roles and responsibilities of all key participants in delivering the Chapter event are clearly defined. • The Chapter event proposal has considered risk and has strong risk mitigation plans.	20%
Audience/participant engagement and impact	• The Chapter event proposal clearly defines its intended audience(s) and/or participants and articulates what strategies will be implemented to reach these effectively. • The Chapter event proposal articulates its intended impact and how success will be achieved assessed, considering engagement, outcomes, and relevance. • The Chapter event proposal considers the potential legacy of the proposed event and the possibility of delivering future WOW activity.	20%
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Safeguarding	• The Chapter event proposal demonstrates a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion - including the participation of men and boys- and incorporates this into the project's design. • The proposal demonstrates how it understands, values and will work with diversity and inclusion to enable inclusive, fair and full participation in the proposed Chapter event. • The proposal demonstrates how it understands, values and will implement Safeguarding measures to create a safe environment in which no child or adult will experience harm or exploitation during their participation in the proposed Chapter event.	20%

	The proposal encourages action that promotes equality and plays a part in removing barriers and redressing imbalance caused by inequality and unjustified discrimination.	
Environmental Sustainability	The proposal demonstrates a commitment to the environment and thinking of ways to minimise the environmental impact of activity, incorporating this into the project's design.	20%
Each application will be scored from 1 to 5 for each criterion, using the following scale: 5 – Excellent: Exceeds expectations; highly relevant and impactful. 4 – Good: Strong alignment and feasibility, with minor areas for improvement. 3 – Satisfactory: Meets the basic requirements but lacks depth or clarity in key areas. 2 – Weak: Falls short in key areas; lacks a clear strategy or justification. 1 – Poor: Does not meet the criteria or is insufficiently developed.		