

HoV @ BRACU

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"BRINGING changes in the lives of ordinary people through empowerment in education." With this motto, HoV-BRACU (House of Volunteers, BRAC University) welcomed the throng of enthusiastic students to their second official orientation ceremony in BRAC University campus. Despite it being a weekend, the turnout of future volunteers was considerable and enthusiastic.

The ceremony started with a brief introduction of the organization by Ahmed Tanjil Ruhullah, the president of HoV-BRACU. HoV-BRACU is one of the local chapters of HoV-MIT (House of Volunteers, Massachusetts Institute of Technology), the other two local chapters being HoV-IBA and HoV-BUET, all of whom aim at encouraging youth from all backgrounds and institutions to take part in international development, and in particular, empowering the education sector in underdeveloped communities around the world.

The introduction was followed by a presentation of both past and forthcoming activities by HoV-BRACU. The presentation involved the three projects currently run by the organization, termed as iSchool (Interactive school), OSCEP (Open-Source Computer Education Program) and Book Drive. Following the president, additional details about the previously mentioned projects were introduced by Imran Newaz Khurshid, the co-founder and mentor of HoV-BRACU.

iSchool involves the use of interactive materials to make learning fun and effective in the form of animated additions of the curricula. This was devised with the aim of eradicating the traditional practice of blind memorization (rote learning) in most institutions by implementing animations and videos with integrated background voices to the syllabus, thereby triggering visual learning capacities and better understanding of the textbook materials being followed. It was developed in collaboration with HoV-IBA, under the supervision of the president of HoV-MIT, and Raqeebul Islam Ketan, the project leader of iSchool.

OSCEP provides computer education, with low-cost, high impact solutions based on open source software, which promotes computer-based education at primary and secondary schools in underprivileged communities of Bangladesh.

Last, but not the least, Book Drive assists the reinforcement of research capabilities of the academic institutions in Bangladesh by providing up-to-date academic texts and journals. This comprises collecting used books and journals, and then distributing them to educational institutions with limited resources all over Bangladesh. For a head start, approximately 15,000 books from Boston have been dispatched to Bangladesh and are getting ready for distribution to the institutions here as per their requirements.

As appealing and inspiring as the details of the projects were, the audience was more moved by the appearance of the chief guest for the ceremony, Alam Master, a devoted teacher and founder of the night school in the poverty stricken village of Fulchori in Gaibandha. Alam Master is an award recipient of the famous TV program in ATN Bangla called "Shada Moner Manush." He was honored for his great humanitarian work of improving the quality of education in his district. The inspirational story of Alam Master's success, narrated by the honorable man himself, further encouraged the students, giving them a vision that if there is a will, there will always be a way to attain something as big as what he has achieved.

All in all, if one is determined, each of us can contribute to better the lives of the underprivileged. HoV has set a stage which provides opportunities for those seeking an occasion to be a part of a cause as big as that of this international organization. Along these lines, HoV-BRACU welcomes and looks forward to the new bunch of keen and dynamic members to unite to improve the archaic educational scheme in our society, encouraging volunteering, and offer a prospect to those who want to make a difference.