



Inspiring Excellence

BUS400: Internship Report

A Study of Humanitarian Crisis Response and Crisis Management in Communications, BRAC Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme

Submitted to:

Md. Shamim Ahmed

Lecturer & Assistant Coordinator

BRAC Business School

Submitted by:

Rashad Wajahat Lateef ID: 14204059

Date:

9/9/2018

**A Study of Humanitarian Crisis Response and Crisis
Management in Communications, BRAC Humanitarian Crisis
Management Programme**

Letter of Transmittal

To:

Md. Shamim Ahmed
Lecturer and Assistant Coordinator
BRAC Business School
BRAC University
66 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212

Subject: Letter of Transmittal for Internship Report on BRAC HCMP Communications

Dear sir,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be able to hand over my internship report on BRAC's Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme.

The information of this report is mainly based on internal BRAC Communications documents and other internal materials. Some other details were gathered from investigative work within the organisation's employees.

I hope that you will find this report worth reading. Please feel free to make any query or clarification known to me that you would like me to further explain. Thanking you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Rashad Wajahat Lateef
14204059

Acknowledgement

This work would not have been possible without the support of the BRAC Business School (BBS), my team in the BRAC Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme (HCMP) in Cox's Bazar, and my colleagues from the BRAC Communications department in Dhaka.

I am especially indebted to my supervisor during my internship period, Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh, Head of Communications, who recruited me for this job and has been supportive of my career goals in every conceivable way. I would like to thank Abdus Salam, Head of HCMP, for allowing me the space and time necessary for me to complete my internship alongside a full-time job. I am grateful to Md. Shamim Ahmed, my internship advisor, who worked actively to provide me with the protected academic time to pursue those goals. I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this and other related projects.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and especially my mother, Parsa Sanjana Lateef, without whose relentless encouragement and support I never would have made it through my undergraduate years in BRAC University.

Executive Summary

I joined BRAC Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme (HCMP) as a communications specialist with the title of Visual Storyteller on 5th August 2018.

Our work included an initial phase of focused services to address the most urgent needs, and then a transitional phase of incorporating additional critical services. Now, as the crisis moves into a more organised phase, we are deepening our response with a focus on disaster risk reduction and transitioning programming towards a humanitarian development approach.

We are actively implementing comprehensive interventions designed to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable people, while supporting them to build skills, resilience and awareness that will facilitate their long-term wellbeing as the situation evolves. Our overall goal is that everyone affected by the humanitarian crisis lives with dignity, security, and opportunity, in social and economic harmony.

My job as a communications specialist is to strategise content plans and content creation systems as well as information and knowledge management systems so that all relevant information reached all relevant stakeholders, such as donors, in a timely and effective manner.

Table of Contents

Letter of Transmittal	i
Acknowledgments	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Profile of the Organisation	5
Introduction	9
Activities undertaken	11
Challenges	22
Concluding statements	23
References	24

Profile of the Organisation

On the 5th of August 2018 I joined BRAC, the world's largest NGO, as a Visual Storyteller for their Communications department.

At BRAC, we act as a catalyst, creating opportunities for people living in poverty to realise their potential. We specialise in piloting, perfecting and scaling innovation to impact the lives of millions. We were born in Bangladesh, are almost completely self-sustainable through our own network of social enterprises and investments, and operate in 11 countries across Asia and Africa.

Our **vision** is to realise a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential.

Our **mission** is to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Our interventions aim to achieve large scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enable women and men to realise their potential. We hold four values close to our hearts that help guide our mission:

- Integrity
- Innovation
- Inclusiveness
- Effectiveness

Our social enterprises are initiatives that engage individuals, micro and small enterprises as suppliers, producers and consumers. Instead of maximising profits, our 13 social enterprises focus on maximising gains in quality of life for all.

Our investments consist of socially responsible companies that assist us in our mission. Our network of seven investments help us strive towards the goal of self-sustainability.

BRAC has also established an educational institution whose goal is not only to provide the highest quality teaching, but also to inculcate the values essential for tomorrow's leaders. BRAC University constantly incorporates the most current educational techniques and material. The journey starts by building a high calibre and supportive faculty and administration team who are capable of teaching the most challenging and up-to-date educational programmes, and empowering them with

knowledge and life skills so that they can take on the challenges of building themselves and a better nation.

Five-Year Strategic Plan

In the next five years, we will empower 20 million of the most underserved and disenfranchised women and men to gain greater access to and have more control over resources, decisions and actions, while continuing to maximise opportunities and expand services for the unmet needs of the 120 million people we already reach in Bangladesh.

Programming:

1. Eliminate extreme poverty:
Reduce the cost of our targeting ultra poor programme and scale it up to graduate over half a million households out of extreme poverty.
2. Financially empower people living in poverty:
Strengthen client protection mechanisms and expand financial education services to all clients.
3. Skills and decent work for underprivileged women and men:
Equip 500,000 young people (50% women, 10% person with disabilities and minority groups) with skills training and link them to decent jobs or entrepreneurship.
4. Resilience to climate change and emergency response capacity:
Establish ourselves as a leading humanitarian response entity, helping people adapt to (and mitigate, when applicable) climate change. Integrate climate change adaptability in all programmes.
5. Gender equality:
Reduce violence, increase men's engagement and increase gender parity within BRAC through integrated actions for women's empowerment across programmes. Create a gender resource centre to provide technical support to programmes.
6. Pro-poor urban development:
Deliver customised, affordable and quality basic services for people living in urban poverty.

Mobilise communities to be more aware of their rights. Advocate for safe, affordable and quality transportation and pro-poor urban governance.

7. Universal healthcare access and improved nutrition:

Address emerging health problems, like non-communicable diseases, increase the professionalism of frontline services and introduce a wide range of for-profit products and services.

8. Invest in the next generation through early childhood and improved education quality:

Enhance quality of and access to education at all levels and advocate for quality education nationally. Free schools will become fee-based, with vouchers for those living in extreme poverty.

Financing:

Amid shifting global development priorities, we will continue to diversify, but in parallel, will become virtually self-sustainable:

1. Most of our social development programmes will adopt surplus generating social enterprise models. Five programmes will be the initial focus; health, education, skills and employment, migration and human rights and legal services. All other social development programmes will implement cost-recovery models, even if they do not generate surplus in the short term.
2. We will selectively accept strategic donor funding for some of our programmes (including climate change, disaster response and eradicating extreme poverty), but donor funding will be increasingly sought through new channels, such as private philanthropy and corporate partnerships.
3. Our social enterprise cluster will position its products and services to appeal to new market segments. Leadership structures and investment plans are being redesigned to allow this to happen.
4. We will improve our organisational efficiency and cost effectiveness, through streamlining our key business processes (eg, procurement, recruitment), and through cutting down avoidable costs.

Organisational focus:

1. Develop management and business thinking capacity:
Change leadership style to encourage risk taking, promote innovation and ensure a continuous succession of leaders. Attract staff with business skills that can implement social enterprise models. Introduce e-learning and strengthen staff capacity on technology and communication.
2. Increase efficiency of structures and processes and leverage greater use of data for decision making:
Incorporate more technology, particularly around data collection and management. Use more evidence in management decision making to run a leaner and more effective organisation.
3. Increase influence through knowledge and evidence-driven advocacy and strategic partnership:
Increase our value as a knowledge partner of choice of other humanitarian and development stakeholders. Attract innovation, implementation and knowledge dissemination partners.
4. Strengthen and align support programmes:
Increase accountability within support units through streamlining processes and introducing feedback loops.
5. Develop mechanisms to strategically support and leverage BRAC International and other BRAC institutions more systematically:
Bring the entire BRAC family together through a global strategy.

With operations around the world in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, South Sudan, Liberia, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Uganda, the Netherlands, the USA and the UK, we are a truly global organisation. The challenges we face today as an organisation may be daunting as they are the same challenges we face as people of the human race, but we have never been better equipped or better prepared to meet those challenges head-on.

Introduction

Rationale

When I was first approached by BRAC with an opportunity to work and report on the fallout from the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya people from Myanmar, all I had in reply was an emphatic yes. This atrocity happens to be the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time, and I found the opportunity to help on the front lines in any capacity I could a privilege and a responsibility, as a citizen of both Bangladesh and the world at large.

I joined BRAC's Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme (HCMP) with the title of Visual Storyteller on the 5th of August 2018. This report will be documenting the first month of my activities on the ground in Cox's Bazar and my insights acquired from working as a communications specialist for the BRAC Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme. I believe this report has the potential to be a valuable resource for anyone interested in how a communications department responds to a humanitarian crisis on an international level.

Objectives

My objective with this internship report is twofold:

1. To provide an in-depth understanding of how BRAC's Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme operates in tandem with its communications team, and
2. How BRAC's communications department strategises and responds to a humanitarian crisis.

Background

An estimated 700,000 Rohingyas have crossed into Bangladesh since 25 August 2017, fleeing violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

At BRAC's Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme (HCMP), we are pursuing an adaptive, phase-wise strategy that sequences our interventions to maximise responsiveness and impact, with the aim of providing integrated services to displaced people and host communities.

This includes an initial phase of focused services to address the most urgent needs, a transitional phase of incorporating additional critical services and a more organised phase with comprehensive solutions.

Our approach is providing critical services at scale in the sectors where we are currently a leading provider in Bangladesh, such as **water, sanitation, health, nutrition, protection, education, livelihood security, intensive behavioural change communication and counselling**, and **distribution of non-food items and shelter** as necessary to ensure dignity and wellbeing.

A key focus is supporting the host communities of Cox's Bazar, where we have been working for 32 years already. We have scaled up in a number of areas, including financial inclusion, health, education, and WASH. We have recruited more than 1,100 humanitarian staff from host communities and increased disbursement of microcredit to support entrepreneurs and small enterprises.

The overall goal is that Rohingyas and host communities live with dignity, security, and opportunity, in social and economic harmony, until acceptable repatriation opportunities become possible.

Activities undertaken

As part of my work as a communications specialist embedded in HCMP, I am required to be familiar with all aspects of HCMP's sectoral operations. My primary objective is to be able to efficiently communicate all of our activities to all relevant stakeholders. This is done on a regular basis with weekly and monthly activity updates from all sectors. The different sectoral activities operating on the ground in Cox's Bazar include:

Agriculture

BRAC aims to uplift the living environment through planting, maintaining and conserving fast growing and deep rooted trees and grasses with other vegetation. We increase the availability of food by promoting sustainable agricultural practices in both camps and host communities. Works are ongoing to enhance the value of environmental components where possible at Ukhiya and Teknaf.

Focus:

- **Environmental Restoration:** Restore the environment to reduce the disaster risk. Different varieties of trees are being planted as actions of the measures against the environmental hazard and to restore the environment. Deep root grass species are also being planted to prevent the landslide.
- **Food Security:** Ensure food security through distribution of different vegetables seeds in the camps and host community to grow vegetables in their Nutri-gardens. It can help the target population to meet the nutritional requirement of the people suffering from malnutrition.
- **Livelihood:** Create livelihood opportunities for the communities by employing them under the Cash for Work programme. The population work to plant trees and transplant vetiver grass, and receive cash in return.

Communication for Development (C4D)

The C4D team disseminates life-saving messages on selected issues (health, hygiene, WASH, GBV, protection and cyclone preparedness) through community mobilisation network established to do

inter-personal communication (IPC) at household level. We ensure the new arrivals and communities have strengthened the capacity to support the improved and equitable development.

Focus:

- Message Dissemination: CMVs visit 40,000 households and reach a total of 240,000 people through face-to-face communication regularly. They also organise IPCs and meetings at household level and with community influencer (identified Majhis, Imams and teachers) groups to motivate the social practice of life-saving behaviours.
- Survey and Feedback Collection: CMVs collect 800 feedbacks every day from the FDMN communities and upload through ETC app. Besides, they provide support to other BRAC sectors/ departments to conduct different surveys in the camps.
- Mobilisation for Vaccination Campaign: C4D staffs mobilise FDMN communities in various vaccination (e.g. Diphtheria, cholera, etc.) campaigns. They also take part in mobilising children to visit health centres for vaccination.

Child Protection

BRAC Child Protection team ensures that children have access to recreational and psychosocial support including referral to services. Our Child Friendly Spaces provide a safe environment offering a safe haven for children to socially interact with other children in the form of fun and games, diverting their minds from the traumatic experiences. Adolescents receive psychosocial aid and life skills sessions allowing them to identify their talents, build future leaders and refraining from harmful activities, such as drugs and violence. The best interest of a child is always prioritised.

Focus:

- Game/Recreational Activities for PSS: the Child Friendly Space (CFS) deliver psychosocial and recreational support for the children in the form of games, drawing, singing and interaction.
- Case Management: Children who may be vulnerable, are supported through referral system and reunification with the help of both social workers and case workers.

- Community Based Child Protection Committees: a committee is formed who actively take actions mitigating problems related to protection of children, trafficking, child labor, neglected, child marriage, sexual exploitation & abuse.
- Adolescent Groups and Clubs: several adolescent groups have been formed gradually supporting and empowering their roles in community mobilisation and act as peer leaders by taking initiatives and sharing their experiences from the in clubs.
- Community Awareness Raising: parents and the community, with the help of influential leaders like ‘Imams’, are made aware of the risks of a child’s protection concerns, by our outreach and social workers.

Education

BRAC operates early learning and non-formal basic education centres. We focus on early grade learning, basic literacy, numeracy, life-saving information, psychosocial support and life skills for the children in the camps and host communities. The curriculum framework of UNICEF are being followed in these centres. We aim to review the effectiveness of the implementation mechanism periodically and improve gradually.

Focus:

- Early learning (ages 4 to 6 years): Learning comprises of pre-literacy (Burmese and English) and pre-math. Arts and crafts are included with games and rhymes. Health and hygiene practices are also taught.
- Non-formal basic education (ages 7 to 10 years): Learning comprises of basic literacy and numeracy in both Burmese and English languages. Life skills are taught along with health and hygiene practices.
- Life skills based education (adolescents of ages 11 to 14 years): Basic literacy and numeracy in both Burmese and English languages are taught along with life skills. Sessions are comprised of health and hygiene practices relevant to adolescents. Several adolescent groups have been formed gradually supporting and empowering their roles in community mobilisation and act as peer leaders by taking initiatives and sharing their experiences from the in clubs.

- Community Awareness Raising: parents and the community, with the help of influential leaders like ‘Imams’, are made aware of the risks of a child’s protection concerns, by our outreach and social workers.

Health and Nutrition

As part of the multifaceted interventions that BRAC responded to the Rohingya crisis, BRAC’s emergency health and nutrition programme was scaled up to accommodate the great unmet needs of the community. We are the largest primary healthcare provider in this response, with a wide range of essential health and nutrition services. Our Tuberculosis and Malaria programme is the only programme targeting these diseases in the Rohingya crisis, and part of the Bangladeshi national programmes.

Focus:

11 primary healthcare centres and linked community health outlets across the camps provide comprehensive primary healthcare packages of services:

- Basic primary healthcare: Emergency care, treatment of common communicable/non-communicable diseases, health education and counselling, nutrition services and counselling, and integrated management of children’s diseases.
- Maternal and newborn care: Immediate life-saving reproductive, maternal and neonatal health, including round-the-clock delivery services attended by health professionals, emergency obstetric and newborn care, antenatal, postnatal care, family planning, and linkage with referral health facilities.
- Specific infectious diseases (TB and malaria): early identification of TB and Malaria are done in BRAC’s laboratories. All positive patients are provided treatment, including directly observed treatment short course (DOTS), in BRAC’s health facilities to prevent the outbreak of the diseases. Also, BRAC distributes insecticide treated mosquito nets to help control the spread of malaria.
- Vaccination: providing routine immunisation as part of the extended programme on immunisation in partnership with the government and WHO, ensuring protection from potential communicable diseases and prevent disease outbreaks of the communities, especially for children and women.

Our nutrition programme offers a holistic approach focusing on:

- Prevention:
 - Educating pregnant lactating women, mothers and adolescent girls on optimal nutritional practices.
 - Providing blanket supplementary feeding and supplements to children, and pregnant, lactating women.
- Treatment:
 - By running a targeted supplementary feeding program.
- Screening:
 - Our teams screen all children, and pregnant, lactating women for malnutrition.

Livelihood

Targeting Ultra Poor (TUP) – Host Community:

- 3,738 IGAs chosen by selected participants
- 201 Interest free loans and particle grants provided to group 2 participants
- 628 productive assets transferred to group 1 participants
- 1,445 participants received classroom training on enterprise
- 550 households visited and provided hands-on training and awareness on ultra-poor graduation

Skills Development Programme (SDP):

- 100 learners trained and graduated in skill development in host community
- 1900 female learners currently in process of being trained in tailoring
- 08 skills training centres in camps
- 16 trainers (8 technical, 8 soft-skills)

Protection

BRAC Protection team offers legal, psychosocial and livelihood support - manage cases on various issues especially on sexual and gender-based violence. We offer safe spaces for women and men to gather, socialise, discuss and solve their issues while providing access to information on current issues related to health and other sectors through information points. Besides, door-to-door services is provided to the community so they can access to all kinds of information. The following facilities can be accessed for various services:

- Community centre: we have established leadership platforms and community groups. There are currently two leadership platforms for men and women, and three community groups for men, women and young people. The centre provides support for vulnerable groups in the community, including specialised services for survivors of gender-based violence.
- Women-friendly spaces: the women-friendly space provide specific services for survivors of gender-based violence. They serve as a refuge for women, who have fewer public spaces in the community, allowing them a space to come together and socialise.
- Information point: the information point collects all kinds of queries and complaints from the community. These could be related to ration cards, aids, services required, violence, disputes, and so on. Outreach workers and volunteers conduct door-to-door surveys to flag any issues which require attention, and raise awareness.

Focus:

The programme focuses on community-based protection (CBP), legal support and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Below are the breakdown of the focuses:

- Empowerment and leadership initiatives for vulnerable groups: BRAC's protection strategy focuses on empowering those who are marginalised in the community to play key decision-making roles in the community.
- Psychosocial support: we focus on mental health, and assist in alleviating the burden of trauma of people who have experienced significant violence and upheaval.
- Legal support: we provide legal support in the form of legal messaging and awareness, and support for sexual and gender-based violence cases and conflict resolution. Legal support through trained lawyers are also provided at community centres and women-friendly spaces.

- Community outreach: our community outreach members regularly visit homes, collect information, and refer to different services. They are an integral component of all the protection facilities.
- Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse of relief workers: it is a rampant problem in humanitarian crises, and is included in the comprehensive protection strategy. Any finding of sexual exploitation or abuse from a worker is grounds for immediate termination.
- Engaging adolescent boys and men: we work to develop healthy masculinity among men and boys. We sensitise gatekeepers like Imams and Majhis (community leaders) who have significant social and religious influence on the community. Also, we enhance moral teachings of the target groups, and develop vocational skills according to their needs.

Shelter and NFI

BRAC Shelter team ensure that the population are able to live with dignity and security until acceptable repatriation opportunities become possible. We have provided make shift shelters from bamboos and tarpaulins exceeding our targets to try and provide to as many households in the settlements. We also distribute live saving essentials including access community kitchens equipped with LPG and gas burner stoves to facilitate cooking at times difficult to gather fire wood.

BRAC aims to provide 30,000 households with shelter and basic essential items. Successfully initiated the pilot Cash Based Programme benefitting 9,015 households. Second phase of cash transfer is currently ongoing.

Focus:

- **Providing support to the Camp in Charge (CiC)** to coordinate and monitor service provision, protection and assistance in accordance with standards through community governance and participatory systems.
- **Community governance and participation mechanism** in close coordination with Community Based Protection (CBP) is maintained by adopting need assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Mainstream protection** by ensuring relevant protection matters in camps are brought to the attention of protection agencies and competent authorities.

- **Care and maintenance** is provided in coordination with CiC and local authorities, and maintaining camp infrastructure and small improvement works.
- **Information Management**, collecting data on the needs of the population and ensure regular collection of details on camp profiles, allowing to find gaps and needs and elaborate service mapping in close coordination with Information Points.
- **Capacity building training** are conducted on site management staff as well as community leaders and members on code of conduct, site management, sexual and gender based violence, and any relevant topics identified through assessment.
- **Emergency preparedness and response** with CiC and involved organisations and ensure coordinate between Safety Unit Volunteers (SUV), Community Health Workers (CWH) and other actors.

WaSH

WaSH ensures targeted population have safe access to portable, clean and safe water, WASH NFIs, sanitation, information and facilities to prevent the deterioration of hygienic conditions and health-seeking behaviour. We provide access to latrines meeting accepted WASH sector standards, as well as access to means of solid waste collection, basic education on hygiene and sanitation, water purification tablets and alum, waste bin and hygiene top-up kits.

Focus:

- **Water Supply:** Installation and maintenance of deep tube wells, pipe water networking system, village pump, water trucking and bottled water distribution during emergencies, aqua water tablets and alum distribution for water purification, etc.
- **Sanitation:** Installation, maintenance, strengthening, cleaning, desludging and decommissioning of latrines, installation and maintenance of bathing cubicles, installation of hand washing stations, cleaning and maintenance of surface drain, solid waste management and faecal sludge management.
- **Hygiene Promotion:** Raise awareness on hygiene for both male and female through hygiene sessions and household visits, hygiene kit distribution and handwashing demonstration.

- **Innovation:** Using innovative ideas (e.g. bio gas plant, village pump, etc.) which are welcome by the community.

Host communities:

- The massive increase in the Rohingya population is raising issues for their host communities- market access, labour competition (livelihoods), deforestation, and inflation, underlining the need for support to host communities. The situation poses a risk of slowing efforts towards socio-economic development of the district.
- Bangladeshi host communities and their Rohingya residents often use the same markets. The new influx gave small and medium traders, particularly at markets located close to settlements such as Kutupalong and Balukhali Bazars, the chance to grow their business. However, as transportation costs have increased their margin of profit may have decreased. Lack of cultivable land is a major issue in Teknaf and Ukhiya. Land scarcity means that only medium and better off households are able to afford land and cultivate it.
- Most people in Teknaf and Ukhiya rely on seasonal labour, including fishing activities and cultivation of betel nuts and leaves as major sources of livelihood. Lack of training opportunities means poor households overwhelmingly resort to unskilled labour.
- Limited, poor quality, and congested roads into existing settlements and new spontaneous sites continue to significantly impede the humanitarian community's ability to conduct response operations.
- Primary school completion rate among the host population in Cox's Bazar is 54.8%, against the divisional and country level rate of about 80%.

2019 Communications Strategy for HCMP

As part of my induction into my new role as a communications specialist, at the head office in Dhaka, my first assignment was to assist my supervisor, the head of communications Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh, put together the new communications strategy for HCMP. My role as a communications specialist is mainly focused on content creation and the forming, maintaining and reviewing the broader strategic plans governing all of that content creation. In that regard, helping create the new strategy as my first assignment was a productive induction process.

The following is a look at the broad strokes of our new communications strategy for HCMP:

The two focal challenges

1. Negative perceptions of the Rohingya community could prevent us from achieving our programmatic goal. More widely, they could also reflect badly on the overall BRAC brand, which could impact other areas of our work.
2. It is still a surprise to most in the world that BRAC has been the biggest civil society responder on the ground since the start.

What would our success look like?

1. Bangladeshis to feel proud about what Bangladeshis have done for the Rohingyas.
2. A national narrative which focuses on the potential of the Rohingya community.
3. The world to see the Rohingya community as people.
4. The world to know BRAC's role in the crisis response.

Our solutions

1. Tap into basic human emotion and empathy
 - Give people experiences so compelling they cannot not share them (bring them to CXB)
 - Give communities the tools to tell their own stories
 - Transform existing content stream into interactive content (polls, Q&A, challenges)
 - Mobilise the arts community as influencers

- Amplify content through new dedicated channels
2. Reinforce the emotion with facts
- Informational and explanatory content
 - Increased, higher quality news coverage

We believe that by tapping into the natural empathy we might feel for a fellow human being in crisis with our content, and by reinforcing that emotion with logical and informational content, we will be able to justify why the Rohingya people should be embraced and not shunned by Bangladesh.

Challenges

Organisational challenge

The main challenge I've faced working as part of the HCMP communications team is the current understaffing on the team. Currently, I am one of the only two people part of that team instead of the planned 5 person team. This makes managing all of the tasks demanded of the HCMP communications team overwhelming and stressful. We do not have a team lead currently, and I am having to serve as an interim lead in addition to my work with content creation.

This issue is part of a larger HR problem BRAC is facing. Their employee turnover seems to be remarkably high in the HCMP. In the last two months, five different managers have resigned from the team for various reasons.

However, the HR policy has recently adapted to address this issue as BRAC has begun investing in its employees.

Another challenge that made it difficult for me to complete this internship report is the fact that I was hired on 5th August, and I was able to work for only a month before presenting this report to my faculty at BBS. Balancing a full-time job while conducting my report writing in a limited timeframe was more challenging than expected.

Academic preparation

My academic preparation at BBS was not all too relevant with my work as a communications specialist for BRAC. I believe if there were courses offered focused on communications, storytelling, or content creation I would have benefitted greatly from them.

I've found that the most useful and relevant courses to my job has been Consumer Behaviour (MKT421) and Strategic Management (MGT401). Both disciplines have helped and informed my decisions while developing the new communications strategy for HCMP.

Concluding statements

To conclude, this job so far has been very educational for me. From aspects of management, writing, content creation, and even how to live independently in a new city, I have learned something new every day. Being a communications specialist assigned to a humanitarian crisis is no easy task, as peoples' lives are at stake should you fail. Efficient information and knowledge management is the cornerstone of the work. That has been my greatest lesson from this past month.

Since I have not actually taken a traditional approach to the internship program and instead opted for a full-time job instead to conduct my report on, I have very little to recommend on the internship program. However, I believe more mandated meetings with internships advisors could help guide the student better in understanding what is to be learned and focused on during the internship period, especially for those who are completely new to the workforce.

References

1. BRAC Annual Report 2016. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.brac.net/publications/annual-report/2016/>
2. Internal BRAC communications materials and products