

2008/august

BRACU Students Negotiated at HPAIR 2008 (Harvard Business Conference), KL, Malaysia

From a highly competitive pool of International Applicants, Iftexhar UI Karim and Sabbir Hossain Chowdhury (BRAC Business School) were selected to participate and perform in the Harvard Project for Asians and International Relations (HPAIR), Business Conference 2008 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 14-17 August, 2008. It is one of the mega events of Harvard University in Asia where selected students and young professionals worldwide come together to interact and learn about most dynamic areas of Asian business from the most prominent industry leaders. The conference seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current economic trends in Asia and create a forum for discussion of new developments in the region.

BRAC Development Institute (BDI) Updates

Seminar on "Rice Market Instability: Who Gains and Who Loses?"

BRAC Development Institute and the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) at BRAC jointly organized a seminar on August 21, 2008 to present findings from repeated sample of households in 62 villages in Bangladesh. Mahabub Hossain (Executive Director, BRAC) and Abdul Bayes (Professor, Economics Department, Jahangirnagar University) discussed the rice market dynamics based on repeat sample surveys, conducted between 1988 to 2008. They explored the causes of the recent price hike, its implications for the levels of poverty and especially extreme poverty, and suggest policy options to mitigate future instability.

This survey data shows substantial improvement in the poverty status (income based measures of poverty) over the last 20 years. But there has been deterioration in the situation over the 2004 to 2007 period due to recent price hike.

They have also mentioned that the fixed income groups (the industrial laborers and the lower level government workers) have suffered the most due to recent price hike. While the day wage laborers or the other vulnerable groups income have been adjusted to some extent.

Citizenship

During the month of August 2008, the Citizenship research team held 3 field workshops with Grameen Bank and Nijera Kori in Khulna and Karmojibi Nari in Kushtia. The purpose of these workshops was to take back the research findings from our survey last year to the areas where we conducted the research and share our findings with the relevant field staff and members of these organizations in order to get their feedback and validate our findings. Additionally we showed the participatory videos that were made by the members of these organizations during the participatory video workshops we held with them last year. The research team also held 3 focus group discussions with Union Parishad chairmen and members in Khulna and Kushtia. This is the first step of our study on local level institutions focusing on their responsiveness particularly towards NGOs and NGO-led citizen demands.

Pathways of Women's Empowerment, South Asia Hub

The Pathways of Women's Empowerment Programme held a regional meeting with its partners from Simorgh, a Women's Resource and Publication Center in Lahore, Pakistan during 7-11 August, 2008. Team members shared the findings of their research and experiences at the field level, made cross-country comparisons and discussed how to consolidate the findings of the research inquiries to produce a joint report.

Pathways also hosted a public lecture titled "Women (re)negotiating Religion - Experiences from Pakistan and Bangladesh" on August 10, 2008. This was a presentation of the findings of the research around women engaging with religion in their daily lives. Samia Huq, a Research Fellow at Pathways, presented an analysis of the work conducted in select urban and peri-urban areas in Bangladesh while Neelam Hussain from Simorgh, related their encounters in the cities of Lahore and Karachi. The presentations were very well received and the question and answers session that followed elicited thought-provoking discussions among the attendants.

The Media Research of the Pathways Programme is currently underway and team members are in the midst of field research. We hope to have the reports for both the religion and media research ready by the end of this year.

The field work of the research on Women Health Workers under the theme of Empowering Work was completed in ICDDR,B Matlab and GK, Savar. The data will be compiled and analysed in the next two months.

Similarly, interviews for the research on Building Constituencies by women's organisations has been carried out and the relevant materials collected from Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Women for Women.

Mathematic and Natural Sciences

Seminar on Food Safety

At the invitation of the Research Centre for Mathematical Physics, University of Chittagong, Professor Naiyyum Choudhury gave a seminar on Food Safety, Public Health and International Trade Issues for Developing Countries in the auditorium of the Centre on 02 August 2008. The faculty members of the RCMP and other departments participated in the seminar.

Seminar on Bioinformatics

A one-day Seminar on Bioinformatics: Prospects and Opportunities for Bangladesh was held on 5 August 2008 at the Centre of Excellence, University of Dhaka. Professor S.M.A Faiz, Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka was the Chief Guest and Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Vice Chancellor; BRAC University was the Special Guest.

The seminar was jointly organized by The Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) and the Department of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, University of Dhaka. Professor Naiyyum Choudhury, Dr. Aparna Islam and Ms. Nazlee Sharmin from BRAC University participated in the seminar. Three invited speakers from the USA presented keynote papers as follows:

Dr. Hasan Jamil, Chair, International Federation of Information Processing, Special Interest Group on Bioinformatics, Wayne State University, USA-"Bioinformatics to Biotechnology: Economics, Education and State Policies".

Professor Animesh Ray, Keck Graduate Institute California- "The New Biology: The Network Metaphor" and Dr. Abdur Rahman Sikdar, ICSI, University of Berkeley, USA, -"Promises of Genomics and Bioinformatics in Bangladesh".

Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury emphasized the need for bioinformatics research in Bangladesh. With the rapid advancing of the internet facilities in the country it is possible to do quality research on genomics and proteomics with available bioinformatics tools. Professor Naiyyum Choudhury in his welcome address thanked the expatriate scientists for responding to the invitation for the seminar and pointed out the importance of collaborative research in the new and emerging areas of biotechnology and genetic engineering.

Training Workshop on Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) of Bangladesh

Dr. Aparna Islam, Assistant Professor of Biotechnology Program, MNS Dept participated in the two-day long training workshop on "Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) of Bangladesh" held in Dhaka on the 5th-6th August 2008. The workshop was organized by the National Biosafety Framework (NBF) Project of the Development of Environment (DoE) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of Bangladesh with technical support from UNEP-GEF. Dr Monorajan Hota and Mr. Damir Amirov, Regional Advisors of UNEP-GEF BCH gave hands-on training to the participants on the Central Portal BCH located in Montreal, Canada while IT specialist Mr. Nazmul Ahsan and his team at the DoE introduced the participants to the Bangladesh BCH that they have developed in accordance to the Central Portal.

The Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) is an information exchange mechanism established to assist concerned people and countries exchanging scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and

experience with, LMOs. Bangladesh, a signatory of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, has the obligation of establishing this web-based biotechnology information mechanism. In this backdrop DoE gave this training to selected members of the NBF project and other relevant stakeholders from the government, non-government, research and academic institutions and organizations of the country. This training program was a continuation of the training that was held on the 29th July 2007, where the same participants were introduced to the concept of web-based information sharing.

National Workshop on Cartagena Protocol and Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) for Bangladesh and Launching of Bangladesh BCH

Dr. Aparna Islam of Biotechnology Program, MNS Dept participated in a day long program on "National Workshop on Cartagena Protocol and Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) for Bangladesh" held in Dhaka on the 7th August 2008. At the inaugural function was presided by Dr. Khandaker Rashedul Haque, DG of the Department of Environment (DoE). Mr. A.H.M. Rezaul Kabir (ndc) Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) was the Chief Guest and Mr. Md. Qamar Munir Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) was the special guest. The session was chaired by. In the opening session, Mr. Kabir launched the web based information center, Biosafety Clearing House for Bangladesh (<http://www.bchbd.org>), which simultaneously got inter-connected to the Central Portal making our country information available throughout the world. By this installation Bangladesh has fulfilled one of the obligations as a signatory of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In the technical sessions obligations of Bangladesh and achievements made so far in fulfilling those were explained by Mr Solaiman Haider, Project Director of NBF, DoE. The functions and uses of Central Portal and BCH-BD were also described in the technical sessions. Need of capacity development and institutional strengthening in experimental facilities were reiterated. In the concluding session Mr. Qamar Munir emphasized on sustainability of Bangladesh BCH. To attain this, importance of training of the relevant personals to take advantage of the vast information available in the Central Portal in order to make educated decision about LMOs and GMOs was elucidated. In this regard, Government's intention to take the training into the next phase where participants who have already received the hands on BCH training will give training to a wider range of people to introduce this new information hub. In this regard, networking of the participants and DoE was underlined to carry out such activity proper in an effective manner.

Seminar on Biotechnology

Professor Naiyyum Choudhury, Coordinator, Biotechnology Programme gave a seminar on New Biotechnology and Human Welfare on 08 August 2008 in the seminar room of the department of MNS. Faculty includes of the MNS and other departments were present in the seminar.

Young Biotechnologists of BRACU Assessing GM Crops

On 21st August 2008 MS students studying Biotechnology at the MNS Department along with their course teacher Dr. Aparna Islam went for a study tour of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), the largest national multi-crop research institute in Bangladesh located in Gazipur. The excursion team was received by Dr. Al-Amin, Principal Scientific Officer of Biotechnology Division, BARI and his team. At first students were given a brief introduction to this three decade old institute, its mission and vision. Finally, they were acquainted with the on-going research projects of the Biotechnology Division which was established in 1998. Although the scientists working in the Division started with only tissue culture, now they are performing transformation of various important crops on a regular basis. Moreover, BARI is the only institute in Bangladesh that is equipped with biosafety assessment of GM crops. Through collaboration with foreign labs the Biotechnology Division now has transgenic Bt egg plant (resistant to stem and fruit borers) and RB potato (resistant to late blight pathogen). Our scientists have reconfirmed the transgenic status of these crops and have also evaluated the performance in the greenhouse. Now scientists are engaged in confined field trial in three regional fields located in Jessarre, Dinajpur and at Hathajari in Chittagong. Dr. Yusuf Akand Senior Scientific Officer of the Division showed various research facilities and on-going research in growth rooms and net house. Transgenic Greenhouse was the most interesting part of the study tour. It was a great opportunity for the visiting team to see transgenic plants and compare them with controls. The student had an exquisite experience when they could touch the leaf of the transgenic plants for the first time in their life.

English and Humanities

Keynote Lecture by Prof. Firdous Azim

Prof. Firdous Azim, Chairperson, Department of English and Humanities, delivered the keynote lecture at a workshop titled "Poverty of Knowledge: Women's History - Crisis and Possibilities," held on 20th August, 2008. The workshop was organized by the Bangladesh chapter of the International Federation for Research in Women's History (IFRWH) and was hosted by the Department of History, Dhaka University.

Undergraduate Thesis Presentation

As a requirement of the ENG 466: Thesis course, the graduating students (Summer 2008) of the Department of English and Humanities gave their thesis presentations on 31st August, 2008. The following is a list of thesis presentations given by the graduating batch:

Nazma Akhter: "The Effects of Culture on Productive Skills"

Tonima Azam: "Importance and Influence of Advertisement Copywriting"

Shahida A. Chowdhury: "Representation of Women in Advertisements"

Tanha Habib: "Schema, and its Positive Impact in ESL Listening Classes"

Anami Kabir: "The Story So Far: Drawing the Map of Children's Literature through Harry Potter"

MA in English: Thesis Presentation

The first two students to graduate from the MA program in English just completed their theses, which was a requirement of the ENG 699: Thesis course. They gave their thesis presentations on 31st August, 2008. The titles of their presentations were as follows:

Aroop Saha: "Middle Class Alienation and the Emergence of the Indian English Novel"

Md. Tofazzal Hossain: "Communicative Language Teaching: Teachers' Perception in Bangladesh (Secondary Level)"

News from GDLN Center

Training by APO - e-Learning Course on the Toyota Production System

This Event was organized by Asian Productivity Organization (APO) in collaboration with National Productivity Organization (NPO) Bangladesh and Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) from 11th Aug to 13th Aug, 2008 at BRAC University Video Conference Center to provide basic training to understand the methodology of the Toyota Production System, its application, and critical success factors. This course will enable participants to use the knowledge in setting up flexible production systems for small-quantity production in their own production processes. The countries connected by Video Conference were Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Economics and Social Sciences

Achievements of ESS Graduates:

- o Nahleen Zahra, a graduate of the Department of Economics and Social Sciences has received full scholarship to pursue Masters Degree in Economics at McGill University, Montreal, Canada.
- o Tanveer Reza Rouf, a graduate of the Department of Economics and Social Sciences has received full scholarship to pursue Masters Degree in Economics at Utrecht University, Netherland.
- o Nirvana Mustava, another graduate of the Department of Economics and Social Sciences has received full financial support to pursue her Master in Economics at York University, Canada.
- o Safqat Rana Sayyed another graduate of the Department of Economics and Social Sciences has received full scholarship to pursue his Master in Economics at Greenwich University, London, UK.

Faculty Members Left the Department:

- o Ms. Dina Tasneem, Lecturer, ESS, has left BRAC University to do PhD in Economics at McGill University, Canada. She has received the full financial assistance from McGill University.
- o Ms. Moshahida Sultana, Lecturer, ESS has left BRAC University to join in the University of Dhaka as a Lecturer.

New Faculty Members Joined in the Department:

- o Dr. Shahidur Rahman joined as Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences. Mr. Rahman did his PhD in Sociology from Monash University, Australia.
- o Md. Abdul Wohab, Lecturer, ESS has returned from his study leave after completing Master in Social

Work, from Flinders University, Australia, and joined in the department as a Senior Lecturer.
o Mr. A. K. Iftexhar Haque, joined as a Lecturer in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences. Mr. Haque did his Master in Asian Studies (Major in Economics) from Lund University, Sweden and his BSS in Economics from the University of Dhaka.
o Mr. Naim Uddin Hasan Awrangajeb Chowdhury joined in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences as a Lecturer. Mr. Rahman did his Master in Economics from the University of Chittagong.

Career Services

Seminar on Call center prospect in Bangladesh by A2Z BPO

A2Z BPO is an emergent organization for call center solution and business process outsourcing solution provider in Bangladesh. Recently they have arranged a seminar jointly with Career Service. The seminar was held on 7th august, 2008 from 11 to 12 pm at AH803 with 27 participants. The seminar was conducted by Mr. Omar Shahrier Nabi, Asst. Manager, Business Development along with two of his colleagues. The seminar topic covered the present call center culture in Bangladesh, organization briefing and way how actually call centers work. Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is the strategic use of outside resources to perform tasks handled by internal staff & resources, none of which are directly related to the functioning of the company. They provide outsourcing services to the area of IT as well. A2Z BPO called for CV's end of the seminar from the participants.

BDjobs.com Campus Career Festival at BRAC University

Career Services and Bdjobs.com proudly organized Campus Career Festival at BRAC University for two consecutive days, August 13 and August 14, 2008. The objective of the festival is to create a bridging activity between the prospective employers and fresh graduates. This event gave excellent opportunity to the employers for 'early booking' of the quality candidates from our participating Universities students. The prospective candidates are recent graduates or those who are going to graduate within a few months time. The festival took place in Indoor Games Room at BRACU. With all the cooperation and appreciation from BRACU family helped the event become a success.

Nine potential companies participated to find suitable applicants from BRACU through the event. The participating companies are:

- Spectrum Engineering Consortium Ltd
- ACI
- Citycell
- Gemcon Group
- Eduaid
- Macomm
- Amiable Tech Solutions Inc
- Bdjobs.com Ltd
- e-Generation Ltd.

Festival Day-1

On the 1st day, the prospective applicants (only the graduates or upcoming graduates) drop their CVs against the positions offered by the participating companies. During the 1st day of the fair BDjoba.com has also organized a seminar on "Right Way for Writing a CV and Facing Job Interview"; presented by Ms. Parveen S. Huda, Recruitment Consultant and Managing Director, Renaissance Consultants Ltd. At the end of the 1st day, from about 300 CVs 139 CVs are short-listed by the respective company. Short-listed applicants were notified through notices in front of the Indoor Games Room, Career Services Office and bdjobs.com also provided short listed candidates name through their website for the interview schedule.

Festival Day-2

On the 2nd Day of the event, representatives from the participating company conducted face to face Interview of the short-listed 139 applicants. The Interview sessions took place at the booths of the company located at the festival venue. bdjobs.com volunteers arranged for all the necessary logistics for the interview session. Career Services also recruited 25 volunteers to manage internal support behalf of BRACU for the event. The selected candidates list will be available in mid September, 2008 after Campus Career

Festival campaign concludes.

A workshop on scholarship opportunities at Monash University

On August 25, 2008 from 2:30-3:30 pm a workshop held at AH401 conference room on the topic "possible scholarship opportunity for BRACU/Bangladeshi students at Monash". The workshop was conducted by Dr Hoa Levitas, regional manager for international relations, marketing and student recruitment, Monash University, Australia. A number of 20 students and 5 BRACU staff attended the workshop from different departments. The workshop focused on why Monash University is preferred by international students as a diversified environment is prominent. Monash University offers scholarships largely for research based programs. The rationale behind this workshop is to provide an insight to the prospective students for higher studies about foreign university scholarship and how they should prepare themselves to avail such scholarships. The session followed with a question answer round to clarify the possible queries of the participants.

Job Placement Report

Fatema Akter Sumi: Nation Wide Communication

Ishtiaq Ahmed: Warid Telecom

Sazia Afrin: BRAC Net

Md. Abu Hanif: Trust Bank Ltd.

Sayera Tasneem: Warid Telecom.

Farha Khanam: Warid Telecom.

Mohammad Mahmudur Rahman Shaon: Singapore Airlines

Md. Rakibul Hasan: Singapore Airlines

Sabrina Ali: Singapore Airlines

Md. Akram Ali: Care Bangladesh

Mishael Aziz : Care Bangladesh

Md. Ekramul Kabir: Care Bangladesh

Saif M. M. Islam: Care Bangladesh

We warmly welcome Abdullah Al-Mahmud who has joined Career Services as Junior Career Services officer from August 03, 2008.

Computer Science and Engineering

Following activities took place in the CSE department during August 2008:

1. Dr. Akm Abdul Malek Azad attended a three day long International conference on Computer, Electrical, and Systems Science, and Engineering organized by WCSET (World Congress on Science, Engineering and Technology) on August 30-31, September 01, 2008 in Singapore. He was invited to serve as session chair as well as present his paper "Delay Analysis of Sample-Data Systems In Hard RTOS" at the conference site in Singapore.

2. IEB (Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh) accreditation team comprising of Prof MM Shahidul Hasan, Prof Anisul Haque, Dr Shah Alam and Engr Rabiul Alam visited BRAC University, CSE Department on 13,14, 18 August 2008 for our ECE (Electronic and Communication Engineering) program accreditation. We are the first among private universities getting this accreditation for our ECE Program.

3. BRAC University Electronics & Communication Club (BUECC) & CSE club jointly organized industrial visit from Aug. 30, 2008 to Sept. 1, 2008 to Cox's Bazar to the following spots:

- Submarine Cable Landing Station (Fiber Optics)
- Meteorological Radar Station
- Beach Sand Exploration Centre

The senior students of ECE & CSE club visited successfully under the guidance of Lecturer Syed Saiful Islam and Senior Lecturer Sadia Hamid Kazi of CSE Department.

4. Ms Farzana Rashid, Md. Imrul Hossain and Ms Rezwana Karim of CSE department left BRAC University for

their PhD program. Mr. Abu Mohammad Hammad Ali also left the department for his Masters program in University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

IGS Updates

The Institute organized a workshop on the 'Strategic Planning for IGS', facilitated by Dr. Golam F. Samdani, Director of BRAC Training Division. The workshop was arranged at the Institute and attended by all the staff at IGS. The objective of the workshop was to chalk out a roadmap to achieve the Institute's mission. The exercise was a continuation of a series that started earlier in the year.

The Institute organized a seminar on the upcoming US elections facilitated by Prof. Eric Uslaner, professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland, on the 2nd of August 2008. The seminar was arranged at the Institute and attendees included staff from IGS and other partner organizations.

The students of the second batch of the MA in Governance and Development (MAGD) successfully completed the course work this month. The Institute also selected twenty-five students for the third MAGD batch. The admission tests were held on the 23rd of August, followed by individual interviews for the short-listed candidates the next day. MAGD classes are scheduled to start from the third week of September.

The Institute organized a training workshop on the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) facilitated by Mr. Manzoor Hasan, Director, IGS. The training workshop was conducted over two days, held on the 30 and 31st August at the BIAM Foundation. The training was attended exclusively by civil servants and the objective of the training was to familiarize the officials with the main features of the UNCAC.

Architecture

'Housing & Development' field study

As part of 'ARC432: Housing & Development' course, students went to Narayanganj on 2nd August 2008, to visit the project areas of Urban Partnership Poverty Reduction Project (UPPRP) funded by DFID and implemented by UNDP. The major objective of this tour was to learn the importance of community participation in the development activities, particularly in design and delivery process of housing. The students were divided into three groups and visited three sites at Muchipara, Kumudini Dhanbad Garden and West Khalpar area. The students observed the way support is being extended for socio-economic development and settlement improvement of these communities. They had elaborate discussion with the people about their achievements so far and tried to generate ideas from the communities about how to address housing in future for them. The students were accompanied by Mike Slingsby, the Project Manager of UPPRP, course teacher Yasmin Ara and faculty members Khondaker Hasibul Kabir and Sayem Khan.

Faculty news

Lecture by professor Fuad H Mallick

Prof Fuad Mallick, Chairperson delivered a lecture in the Institute of Architects Lecture series titled "Architectural Education in Bangladesh: Context for a Future" at the Chayyanaut Auditorium in Dhanmondi on 25th July. He spoke about the situation of architectural education the country and the issues that are of concern and need to be addressed. The lecture was followed by a discussion by the audience.

Exchange visit by faculty

Huraera Jabeen, Senior Lecturer, Department of Architecture rejoined after the exchange visit in Development Planning Unit (DPU) of University College London in connection to her research 'Adaptation to Climate Change in Cities' funded under the British Council Higher Education Link Program. She worked with Dr Cassidy Johnson and Adriana Alan in DPU for 6 weeks in developing the research work and resources. Also she met several key persons of different institutes in UK and USA including King's College London, IIED, MIT and Columbia University for discussing research issues and developing future networks.

James P Grant School of Public Health

MPH Programme

The module on Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases ended on July 31st. The course on Public Health Nutrition started on August 3rd and ended on August 14th. It was taught by Tahmeed Ahmed and Ziauddin Hyder and Mejbah Uddin Bhuiyan was the teaching assistant. The students at present are being taught the module on Aging and Health which started on August 17th and would go on till August 28th. This module is being taught by Dr. Zarina Kabir and Dr. Mostafa Zaman. Dr. Tanvir Ahmed is working as the teaching assistant for the course.

Events

Launch of the Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS: A UNAIDS Collaborating Centre

Through a formal agreement between UNAIDS and the School of Public Health (BSPH), BRAC University, the Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS: A UNAIDS Collaborating Centre, was launched at the BRAC Centre, on August 4th, 2008. Mr. Fazole Hassan Abed, Founder and Chairperson of BRAC, was present at the occasion as the Chief Guest. Dr. AMR Chowdhury, Dean of the School of Public Health, BRAC University delivered the welcome address. Mr. AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, the Hon'ble Health Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Bangladesh; Mr. Dan Odallo, Country Coordinator of UNAIDS; Dr. Rounaq Jahan, Convenor, Advisory Committee, Bangladesh Health Watch and Dr. Alejandro Cravioto, Executive Director, icddr,b were special guests and also spoke on this occasion. Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Vice Chancellor of BRAC University chaired the event and Dr. Sabina Faiz Rashid, Assistant Professor and Centre Coordinator, BSPH, concluded the ceremony by giving the vote of thanks. Dr. Razia Sultana, Research Associate, BSPH, was the MC for the event.

The Centre is designated as a UNAIDS Collaborating Centre for research, policy advocacy, and training activities utilizing the state-of-the-art methods and technologies of teaching and learning and providing unique opportunities in hands on field experience in dealing with gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh and other developing countries. The Centre will combine research, advocacy, and policy/programme development in three distinct and often interrelated areas. The major activities of the Centre will focus on; creation and generation of knowledge, promoting a creative discourse, dissemination of information, experience and knowledge, building network and partnership, and advocacy on gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The Centre will operate following the philosophy and principles of BRAC and the BRAC School of Public Health. The Centre will be hosted at BSPH and there are already a number of on-going activities taking forward the agenda on Gender, Sexuality and Rights and HIV/AIDS, including workshops, conferences, brainstorming sessions, and training and capacity building that have been held in 2007 and 2008.

Training Held for the Stigma and Discrimination Index Research Project

A four day training was held for Research Assistants on 10th August - 13th August 2008, at YWCA Training Centre, Mohammadpur, Dhaka, as part of the 'Stigma Index', a participatory action research aimed to discover the social stigma and discrimination of the PLHIV in Bangladesh, initiated by UNAIDS Bangladesh secretariat. Ashar Alo was selected as a key implementer to carry out the research activity with the technical collaboration of James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University and IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation/FPAB (Family Planning Association of Bangladesh)). On behalf of the school, Dr. Razia Sultana, Research Associate, BSPH and Nabilah Khan, Research Support Staff participated and facilitated the training sessions. Dr. Sabina Faiz Rashid, Assistant Professor, BSPH and Ilias Mahmud, Lecturer, BSPH held a session on Qualitative Research Methodology. The core trainers were Tony Michael Gomes, National Consultant, UNAIDS and Dr. ASA Masud, Focal Point, AIDS, FPAB.

Interns Visit from the Nagasaki University, Japan

BRAC School of Public Health and Nagasaki University, Japan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote research, education, and capacity building especially in the area of health development between the two institutions. Following the MOU, 11 interns and members from the Nagasaki University and JICA Dhaka are on a tour of BRAC and icddr's project sites to acquire first hand knowledge and experience on health systems, project management, and project activities; understand the process of problem analysis and formulation of projects; and make use of this experience in analyzing issues and formulate projects in the field in Japan. The duration of the intern programme is from 27th August - 16th September 2008. At the end of the visit the students will present their reports based on the knowledge and experience they gained and exchange ideas with the School before leaving.

Visitors from Rockefeller Foundation, New York and Results for Development Institute, Washington DC On August 21st the Secretariat, Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW) at BSPH had Lily S. Dorment, Research Associate, from The Rockefeller Foundation, New York and Stephanie Sealy, Senior Program Officer, Results for Development Institute, Washington DC as visitors. The visitors had a meeting with the Working Group Members and Secretariat, BHW. The visitors were interested to know about the Health Watch study on the health workforce, particularly the prevalence of informal and traditional providers and to know about the work the working group is engaged in, (or knows about) that involves innovative health delivery or financing models in Bangladesh.

The participants described the visitors about the BHW governing structure, working process, past and current activities, limitations and also about the future plans. The visitors highly appreciated the BHW 2007 Report and express interest to support such initiatives. The Secretariat, BHW presented copies of BHW Reports and also the School Annual Report to the guests.

Workshop on Improving the Performance of Health-Related Markets in Meeting the Needs of the Poor An International workshop was held from August 24th -26th, 2008 at icddr,b organized by e Future Health System , Institute of Development Studies and icddr,b. The objective of the workshop was to improve framework for understanding interventions for making health- related markets work better for the poor. It also aimed at building greater understanding of existing and proposed interventions in addition to exploring possibilities for building an inter -country partnership for innovation and learning. Participants were from Nepal, Cambodia, India, UK, Belgium, USA and Bangladesh. From the school Prof Dr. Anwar Islam and Dr Farah Mahjabeen attended the workshop.

Workshop on Sexual and Reproductive Health at Chakaria, Cox's Bazar

BRAC School of Public Health with assistance of icddr,b, Chakaria campus organized two dissemination workshops on 6th and 7th August 2008 titled 'Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH) Concerns of Married Men'. The workshops intend to raise awareness among providers (both formal and informal) about SRH issues in general and interpreting those concerns beyond biomedical focus in particular. The workshop provided opportunity for the providers to identify the areas of major sexual and reproductive health concerns, share SRH experiences, perception about the providers, community level recommendations and exploring ideas and suggestions for future planning to meet the challenges of sexual and reproductive health concerns.

16 people attended the first workshop. The participants came from different backgrounds, which include doctors from government hospitals, private hospitals, independently practicing MBBS doctors, NGO health workers, journalist of different national and local dailies. The second workshop was participated by 34 participants representing homeopath practitioners, traditional healers (kabiraj, hakim, ojha, boidda etc.), faith healers, pharmacist, village doctors, paramedics, village health workers and journalists. In both workshops the participants presented different practical experiences, insights, and views, both at personal, organizational and national level and the workshop provided an extremely valuable opportunity for knowledge, dialogue, information and experience exchange. It gave a good impression and understanding of the many perspectives that can and should be taken into account when defining and implementing policies.

The workshop was opened by Dr. Mahbubul Alam, Upazilla Health and Family Planning Officer of Chakaria Upazilla Health Complex. Ilias Mahmud lecturer of SPH, BRAC University delivered the key presentation based on the research findings at Chakaria on SRH concerns of married men and their access to services for those concerns. Senior Shahanoor Akhter Chowdhury, Research Associate and Owasim Akram, Research Associate of the school were also present at the workshop. The workshops got a widespread coverage in different national and local dailies.

Faculty News

New Staff

Nabilah Khan, joined the School on July 27th, as Research Support Staff for the project on Stigma and Discrimination of HIV Positive People funded by UNAIDS and in partnership with Ashar Alo Society. She has completed her BA degree in dual concentrations including Health: Science, Society and Policy, and, Women and Gender Studies in 2008 at Brandeis University in the United States. Before joining BSPH, she worked as a Peer Counsellor at Financial and Academic Services of Brandeis University, counselling students from troubled backgrounds in academic and financial concerns, in the US. She worked with Social Marketing

Company in their Maternal and Neonatal Health Project under Social Franchising & Quality Assurance Department, and also icddr,b in their Zinc Tuberculosis and Zinc Pneumonia study in Bangladesh. She worked as a Teaching Assistant for an introductory Women and Gender Studies Course called "Women and Gender in Culture and Society" at Brandeis University, conducting research on gender and leading classes once a week. Her interests lie in health and gender related development including gender equity, sexual rights and health service accessibility of disadvantaged groups.

Dr. Nasima Selim rejoined the BSPH as a lecturer in July 10th, 2008.

Suborna Camellia, joined on July 1st, as Senior Research Assistant for Research Project on "Gender-based Violence among Urban Slum Residents in Africa and Asia: a comparative study between Kenya and Bangladesh". She has over six years experience of working on several research projects in some renowned national and international organizations like BIDS, BUIED, Save the Children Sweden Denmark and icddr,b. Some of her work has already been published in Bangladesh Education Journal, BAFED, Journal of Anthropology, Jahangirnagar University and BUIED Research Report Series. She completed her MSS and BSS in Anthropology from Jahangirnagar University. Her areas of interest are gender, child rights, education and poverty.

Faculty Activities

Dr. AMR Chowdhury, Dean, BSPH and Dr. Shahaduz Zaman, Associate Professor and Coordinator of the MPH programme, joined the International conference on 'The new directions for public health education in low and middle income countries' held in Hyderabad, India during August 12th -14th, 2008. Dr. Mushtaque chaired the plenary session: Public Health in the 21st century: Determinants, dynamics and directions.

Dr. Zaman, made the pace setter presentation of the working group under the theme; 'Evaluating new models of public health education: Indicators of quality, relevance and impact on health systems' where he presented the BRAC School of Public Health.

Dr. Anwar Islam, Professor, BSPH has published a series of articles in the English daily New Age. His latest article titled, "A more holistic approach to women's health issues" can be accessed at <http://www.newagebd.com/2008/jul/23/oped.html> . The other articles that were published on April 7th and April 12th, 2008 respectively are titled "Challenges for the health system in Bangladesh" and "Need for a radical new perspective" respectively. These may be accessed at: <http://www.newagebd.com/2008/apr/07/oped.html> <http://www.newagebd.com/2008/apr/12/oped.html>

Dr. Mizanur Rashid Shuvra, Lecturer of the School has been appointed as a full time visiting instructor in the Global Health Department of School of Public Health and Health Services of George Washington University in Washington DC, USA for the period September 2008 - August 2010. According to the TOR offered to him as a coordinator of the Global health Research Method course, he will develop, further refine and teach graduate level courses in Global Health Methods, including components on Study Design and Ethics, Data collection and Data analysis. Dr. Shuvra will also be responsible for maintaining liaison with other Global Health faculty to streamline the team teaching the elements of Global Health Methods Tracks. He will also refine the ongoing partnership between George Washington University and BRAC University, with particular emphasis paid to the development of the second semester intensive exchange program between these two Universities. He will develop exchange program curricula and training modules to be implemented upon his return to Bangladesh.

In addition to all these Dr. Shuvra has also been accepted as one of the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Students in the same department. He is expected to complete his course work for 2 years starting from September 2nd, 2008 and return to Bangladesh for the Research component of the DrPH program for a year and head back to DC for the final year for completion of his dissertation and defense. Dr. Shuvra will be accompanied by his spouse Lily and their son Ridwan for 2 years in DC. The family thanks everyone for the excellent support of the staffs from SPH as well as the University and seeks blessings from all.

Shahanoor Akter Chowdhury, Senior Research Associate, BSPH; Dr. Nasima Selim, Lecturer, BSPH, Dr. Razia Sultana, Research Associate, BSPH and Nabilah Khan, Research Support Staff, BSPH attended a day-long workshop on "Poverty of Knowledge and Women's History: Crisis and Possibilities" on August 20th, 2008 organized by the International Federation for Research in Women's History (IFRWH), Bangladesh Chapter. The workshop was held at the Faculty of Arts, University of Dhaka.

Mahrukh Mohiuddin, Senior Research Associate, received a scholarship to attend the CSBR Sexuality Institute, 2008, organized by the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies in Cyberjaya, Malaysia from August 16th to August 23rd. The Institute was jointly organized by Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) in Turkey and Sisters in Islam of Malaysia. Participants were activists, researchers, and practitioners undertaking innovative and groundbreaking work from 12 different countries who also shared their country experiences. The School is a member of the Coalition.

Mejbahuddin Bhuiyan, Research Associate, BSPH and Dr. Nahitun Naher, Research Associate, BSPH attended a 3-day workshop on "Scientific Report Writing on Reproductive Health Programs". It was organized by Population Council, WHO and USAID at Spectra convention centre, Dhaka from August.26th - 28th.

Intern joins BSPH

Lauren Van Enk, a MPH student from the School of Public Health and Global Studies, George Washington University joined BSPH on August 31st, 2008. She will be with the school for a period of four months wherein she would be involved in assisting with the UNAIDS project and the NIPORT Project. Her area of interest is Maternal and Child Health.

BIZ BEE Quiz Competition, 2008

In the contemporary world to achieve the competitive advantages, away from the mainstream bookish culture a dynamic student should need to have an adequate knowledge about his/her surroundings like-current business and economy condition, geography, world heritage etc. As the consequence of such a flickering vision, very recently BIZ BEE (BRAC University Business Club) has organized a quiz competition titled - "Biz Quiz Competition, 2008" on August 07, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in UB 104, BRAC University Campus.

In Total 8 teams (with 3 students in each team) from different departments had participate in this Quiz Competition. The questions criteria were- contemporary business and economy, geography, sports, history, culture, literature etc. From the Initial round among the 8 teams, in total 4 teams were able to compete in the Final round.

The members of the Champion Team are- Md. Rizwan Shamim, Arif Nasir, Ashiqur Rahman
The members of the Runner's up team are- Khondokar Fahim Mostakim, Fatima Akhter Sumi, Istiaque Ahmed Mallick

Honorable Pro-Vice-Chancellor of BRAC University- Dr. Saleh Uddin Ahmed, Dean of BRAC Business School (BBS) Dr. Iftekhhar Ghani Chowdhury attended the program and the faculties of the BBS department, were in the panel of judges. At the end of the program, honorable Dean of BBS gave the awards and crests to the Champion team.

On behalf of the BIZ BEE family we would like to convey our appreciation to all the participants of this quiz competition to make it vigorous and to give us an hour of immense excitement, thanks to Pro-VC, Dean, the faculties and to all the members and volunteers of BIZ BEE for their enthusiastic supports. Our special thanks to Ms. Shireen Abedin, Advisor of BIZ BEE, for her incessant support and ideas through out the program. This really helps to make this event a successful one.

We would like to congratulate the Champion Team, the Runner's up team, and all the participants groups from the BIZ BEE family.