

## Rewarding the pursuit of knowledge

Brac University launches new scholarships for Bangladeshi women

December 6th, 2018

Scholarships provide an opportunity for underprivileged yet bright individuals to earn an education, enter the workforce, and become contributing members of society. In Bangladesh, with the improvements in gender parity that have been attained over the last decade in the enrollment of girls in schools, it is time to consider the future of young women pursuing higher degrees, particularly in the field of science. Recognizing this urgency, the Brac James P Grant School of Public Health (Brac JPGSPH) at Brac University will be launching the new “Amena Azfar and Hurmatunnessa Rob Scholarships” for women pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at the School.

The launching ceremony of “Amena Azfar and Hurmatunnessa Rob Scholarships” took place on December 01 at the Brac JPGSPH campus, icddr,b building, Mohakhali, Dhaka. Sir Fazle Hasan Abed KCMG, founder and chairperson of Brac and Brac University was present as chief guest. Hafiz Ahmed Mazumder and Barrister Nahid Kabir, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries were also in attendance as special guests. Concluding remarks were made by Dean and Professor of Brac JPGSPH, Dr Sabina Faiz Rashid.

The scholarship comes from a generous gift given by Dr Mushtaque Chowdhury, founding dean of the school. Dr Chowdhury played a critical role in establishing the school in 2004 and has been an advisor to the institution since 2014. “A real impact of the school is making public health education a popular subject for higher education,” he said.

After selling the land that he owned in Uttara, Dhaka, Dr Chowdhury used the money for the purpose of this scholarship. He said the scholarship was named after his mother, Amena Azfar and his mother-in-law, Hurmatunnessa Rob—two

very important women in his and his wife's lives. "I decided that giving the money to the school will sustain the impact of this money for much longer," he said. "This will help the school to move forward as well as help bring in more students, particularly young women, and in turn benefit future generations," he added.

He also explained that, with economic development and growing middle and upper classes, many individuals do not know where to invest their money. "By creating this scholarship, I want to show them that there are different ways of giving," said Dr Chowdhury. He hopes to lead by example and inspire other Bangladeshis to contribute to the future of the country's education by starting similar scholarship programs across various academic institutions.

*Brac James P Grant School of Public Health was founded in 2004 in Dhaka, Bangladesh to address the unmet public health challenges particular to Asia, Africa, and South America. The school's institutional partners are Brac and icddr,b.*