

Construing the Craft of Communications
at
BRAC Skills Development Programme

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August 2017



Inspiring Excellence

BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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at
BRAC Skills Development Programme

A Report Submitted
to
The Department of English and Humanities
of
BRAC University

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In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements
For the Degree of
Bachelors of Arts in English
August 2017

Acknowledgement

When I started my undergraduate program in English at BRAC University, I never realized that this excursion would turn out to be so endearing and illuminating. The well-equipped course curriculum and the friendly environment in the English department made my undergraduate life exciting and filled with knowledge. It was a delight to have splendid personalities like Professor Afsan Chowdhury and Professor Firdous Azim as my course instructors. I feel fortunate to have such inspiring faculties like Mr. Mahmudul Haque, Ms. Nawshaba Ahmed, and Ms. Ruksana Rahim Chowdhury. Especially, I would like to thank my BRAC University supervisor Ms. Roohi Huda for her patience, guidance, and support during my internship period, and while writing the report. I would also like to thank everyone of the seniors of BRAC Skills Development Programme who were extremely helpful all through my internship period. Mostly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Samira Lisa Syed (Knowledge Management and Fund Raising Specialist) for her belief in my potential which has made my internship period at BRAC Skill Development Programme an unforgettable experience. Without her supervision and guidelines, I could not have adapted much about the significance of communication and media in the world of nonprofit organizations.

Farzana Chowdhury Trina

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1. Introduction

According to a new research conducted by Psychologist Anna Vedel of Aarhus University in Denmark, students studying certain subjects have particular personality attributes. For example, students who study Law are likely to score highly for extraversion, low for openness and agreeableness and medium for neuroticism and conscientiousness. The research also states that a student of Arts or Humanities subjects scores highly in terms of neuroticism and openness, low for conscientiousness, and medium for extraversion.

Proving the study right, I did my Bachelors of Arts at BRAC University and I chose Media and Cultural Studies as my area of concentration. In this case, three key factors motivated me to choose Media and Cultural Studies as my area of concentration. Firstly, by nature I am very inquisitive. I believe, a career in journalism is appropriate for someone who probes until he or she gets the complete story. Secondly, I have a passion for travelling. While not every journalistic position requires cross-country or overseas travel, some still do. Plus, many journalism assignments involve that sense of exploration associated with taking a trip, even if one never boards a plane. Through the professional lens, a journalist tends to view his or her hometown and region in a completely new light. While working on assignments, as a journalist I might cover the local theatre scene and find myself going to watch plays on a regular basis; or, I might find myself in a courtroom covering a weekly beat. Walking through a neighborhood, as a future journalist, I notice things I never noticed before because I am always looking for that next story. Additionally, deriving pleasure from getting to the bottom of someone's story, and retelling it eloquently is the base of fine journalism, and telling people's stories excites me. I believe, these are the personal traits that make me a perfect fit for studying Media and Cultural Studies.

Moreover, we live in a multicultural and media-saturated world. The greater part of what we think about the world comes to us through the media – however what amount of information do we know about the media? As a source of data, producers of entertainment or modes of artistic self-expression, contemporary media is very at times subject to grave inspection and outrageous interrogation, except during heated moments of scandal, crisis or panic. To illustrate this, in 2016, speaking at a panel discussion on ATN News, editor Mahfuz Anam conceded that *The Daily Star* ran stories fed to the newspaper by military intelligence outfit DGFI in 2007 and 2008. The stories denounced Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina of corruption. This led demands in the parliament by several lawmakers calling for the trial of Mahfuz Anam and *The Daily Star* publisher Latifur Rahman. This incident proves that while supplying news media can also become a victim of media itself. Provided that, studying Media and Cultural Studies is an attempt from my side to understand the mode of production and consumption of media and culture products.

To sum up, I chose this particular concentration area because the courses offered in Media and Cultural Studies stream at BRAC University provides the learners with the theoretical insights, investigative competence and far reaching learning. These aspects are essential when it comes to exploring the production, meaning and consumption of media and cultural goods. Media and Cultural Studies helps us to evaluate their social, economic and political significance, and to recognize their key role in shaping who we are, what we think, and what we value. The incident of Shahbag Protest can be mentioned here as an example. On February 5, 2013, the protest began in Shahbag following demands for capital punishment for war criminals. Protesters considered war criminal, Abdul Kader Mollah's sentence too lenient, given his crimes. Bloggers and online activists called for additional protests at Shahbag and tens of thousands of people

joined the demonstration, which gave rise to protests across the country. In newspapers, the news of the protest came up with headlines like- *“SHAHBAGH PROTEST’: SPIRIT”*, *“IDENTITY AND JUSTICE, Shahbag Beyond Boundaries”*, *“Roar!”* As a result, soon the protest became a symbol of the youth and unity of Bangladesh.

To pursue an internship, I chose BRAC, an international development organization based in Bangladesh. It is the largest non-governmental development organization in the world. Set up by Sir Fazle Hasan Abed in 1972, BRAC is available in each of the 64 districts of Bangladesh as well as 13 other nations in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

As a student of Media and Cultural Studies, I am a keen observer, and very much open to social changes, in other words, revolution. In Bangladesh, from a social perspective, it is impossible to imagine the word ‘revolution’ without the assistance of NGOs like BRAC. BRAC works with people at the grass root level and deals with foreign diplomats. Therefore as an intern, I had a vast area to learn and gather experiences from.

2. History of BRAC Skills Development Programme



The Skills Development Programme (SDP) was launched in March 2015 considering the potential leadership role BRAC can play in the skills development sector of the country. It builds on successes, good practices, and lessons derived from the Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR) Project, a pilot launched in 2012 under the BRAC Education Programme. Developed within the framework of the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2011, BRAC SDP corresponds to BRAC's overarching goal of eliminating extreme poverty. It also contributes to all of BRAC's Strategy 2016-2020 programmatic priorities (keeping in line with the Sustainable Development goals, every five year BRAC Bangladesh sets strategic goals for the next five years which includes contribution of every BRAC programme running all over the country). The purpose of BRAC SDP is to provide a holistic demand based training to youth and adults with a special focus on decent job opportunities within Bangladesh's growth sectors and abroad. Accordingly, it aims to provide competency based training to young people and adults (50% female, 10% with disabilities) including labor migrants and disadvantaged groups. BRAC SDP has a particular focus on providing services to the poor and disadvantaged in both urban and rural areas. BRAC SDP's main focus areas include:

- BRAC Institute of Skills Development, a registered training organization offering market driven training in growth sectors.

- Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR), a dual apprenticeship model that reintegrates school dropouts back into learning.
- Pro-poor Growth of Rural Enterprises Through Sustainable Skills Development (PROGRESS), a module that initiates skills training for youth in the light engineering sector.
- Business Incubation includes customized micro loans through business incubation support.
- Social Inclusion, engaging community members to create safe spaces for young people.

Vision, values, and personality of BRAC SDP

Our Vision

A world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential.

Our Values

Innovation
Integrity
Inclusiveness
Effectiveness

Our Personality

Visionary
Engaging
Fair
Resourceful
Courageous

3. A Comprehensive Glimpse

I started interning with BRAC Skills Development Programme (SDP), Head Office in Dhaka, from January 18, 2017. I was specifically assisting the Knowledge Management and Fundraising Unit of BRAC SDP. This is the only unit in the programme that directly connects to BRAC Communications. As a result, during the internship, I got to perform various tasks that correspond to my area of concentration, Media and Cultural Studies. While interning at BRAC SDP, I developed and translated (Engl.-Bangla) write-ups and case stories for social media platforms like Facebook, as well as communication materials. For example, fact sheets for donors and partners. Along with that, I designed materials for internal and external communication using Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign. I also conducted research and drafted scripts for the official programme website. Additionally, I prepared questionnaires and conducted qualitative interviews with the program's clients both face-to-face in the field as well as over the phone. Likewise, I put together assessment questionnaires concerning the qualitative aspects of the programme's projects. I also translated project necessities such as interviews, statistics, etc. for the team. Moreover, I wrote articles on prevailing state of minorities — transgender, persons with disabilities as well as child marriage victims in Bangladesh. I also took photos for project documentation purposes and took care of the photo stock of the programme. One of my primary responsibilities was to communicate with the donors and beneficiaries. Along with that, I was responsible for keeping the project based information up to date. I also recorded significant information to organizational memory. The internship with BRAC Skills Development Programme ended on 18th April 2017.

4. Interviews

Throughout the internship period, I conducted twenty-six interviews; most of these interviewees were BRAC beneficiaries including persons with disabilities, child marriage victims, young widows, transgender as well as young entrepreneurs and skill trainers. As the source was diverse the interview process and the experiences accumulated from them were unparalleled.

Interviews may be conversational, but they are not casual conversations. Organization is essential, as is attention to detail and a firm will. According to John Brady, author of *The Craft of Interviewing*, an effective interviewer knows what he or she wants from an interview. In my case, the process used to begin well before I spoke to the other person, be it face to face or on the telephone. The intensity of my preparations relied upon the depth and importance of the interview. At the beginning of every interview, here is what I decided to ask myself:

- What do I want to know?
- Who are my audiences and what do they need to know?
- Who is most likely to give me what I need?
- Who is the closest to the action or issue?

There are some principles of interviewing that I followed:

- I. Preparing carefully, familiarizing myself with as much background as possible. For, example, before interviewing Shabnoor (a member of the transgender community), I made sure that I understood the term transgender. I also did a brief research on how the transgender community operates in Bangladesh.
- II. Establishing a relationship with the source conducive to obtaining information.

- III. Asking questions that are relevant to the source and that induce the source to talk.
- IV. Stating the purpose of the interview.
- V. Explaining the interview process to the source.
- VI. Giving the source ample time to reply.
- VII. Listening and watching attentively.

When it comes to the methods, it is hard for me to say which method I liked the most because each has its advantages and disadvantages. My preferred method of interviewing sources depended on the type of story I was instructed to prepare.

The phone interview offers the conversational appeal of an in-person meeting, but it lags the rapport of face to face conversation. I often used to record my phone interviews. In that case, I took permission from the interviewee at the beginning of the conversation. The first question from me was always ~~“May I record you so that I may quote you accurately?”~~ I learned in the ENG 440, English for Print Media course, that I always have to take the interviewee's permission before recording interviews.

On the other hand, the in-person interview gave me the most insight into a source's body language and facial expressions. It almost had the flow of an actual conversation, unlike a series of impersonal questions and answers completed remotely. However, face-to-face interviews often result in the overflow of data. As a result I could not capture everything at once. When I jotted down quotations, I missed what the person said next. It was hard to be fully present in a conversation as I was observing it and taking notes. However, I believe that is the sort of skill that becomes better with practice, and I was still learning while doing the internship.

Following is an interview of a BRAC beneficiary that I drafted in a survey format:

1. Name-Fouzia Rahman Shathi

2. Age-26

3. How many members are there in your immediate family?

3

4. Who is/are the earning member(s) in your family?

My husband and I.

5. What does your husband do?

He works as the commercial officer at a garment factory.

6. Where do you live?

Johurabaad, Mirpur, Dhaka

7. Did you migrate? (If yes, from where, when, why?)

No, we are locals. My family has been living here for a long time.

8. Say something about your educational background.

From my childhood on, I consider myself very creative and always wanted to pursue a career in the area. Henceforth, after taking HSC exam in 2008, I enrolled in a fashion-designing course at Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology. However, I had completed 3 semesters out of 8 before I conceived my first child. I tried to carry on my studies afterwards but the preceding

determination was lacking so I dropped the course.



Shathi (26), BRAC Business Incubation (PROMISE).

9. How did you join PROMISE?

Right after appearing SSC exam, out of personal interest I did a short course on beautycare. In 2013, after my daughter's birth, I took a break from formal education but deepinside I always had the desire to become an entrepreneur. I used to come to Heaven Doll Beauty Parlour as a customer when the owner, Tumpa apa recommended PROMISE.

10. Where do you work now (full name)?

Heaven Doll Beauty Parlour

11. Currently how much do you earn?

I am working here just to brush up my skills. Tumpa apa offered me 5000 taka and I am happy the amount.

12. What do you do with the money?

It is a very small amount to depend on. Then again, I do not like to bother my husband for money to buy every little thing. Therefore, sometimes I buy stuff for my daughter with the money.

13. Is your supervisor supporting you to start your own business?

She is very helpful. She is the one who recognised my talent and encouraged me to start afresh.

14. Do you have any plan for future?

Right now, my only focus is to start my own business. As a beginner, I want to start it in a small scale. In future, I want to go to India and pursue a higher degree in Aesthetics and Beauty Care. My aim is to launch a beauty care chain all over the country.

15. Have you already started to work for it?

I think in this field networking is very important. I have already told my clients that I am starting my own parlour. In addition, I am keeping in touch with the local beauticians and parlour owners who are backing up my plan with their valuable

guidance. I have also found a place right in front of a school that is perfect for a beauty parlour.

16. What are your leisure time activities?

Being a fashion-designing dropout whenever I get some free time, I make sketches. I also try new beauty experiments on myself. Recently, I have tried a new hair colour, which was liked by two of my clients. So, they have taken my appointment for this week to do the same hair colour.

17. Why did you enroll in this course?

As I was a business major in SSC and HSC, I already knew how to run a business. Even so, I chose PROMISE because it offers a hands-on training on business. Through this training, I am already getting to experience the ups and downs of running my own business. It is gradually preparing me for the future possibilities and difficulties.

18. Are the tasks/ homework effective? Explain how.

The tasks are very effective. For example, in one of the classes we were given a home task where we had to look for an appropriate place for our new business. I chose two places and talked to their owners. I also took photos of the locations and showed them to the trainers.

19. Can you understand everything that the trainer explains?

Yes.

20. Is it too easy for you, or is the trainer explaining it very well? What makes it easy to understand the content?

The trainer is very helpful as well as the videos are self-explanatory. I think the module is designed in a way to make it easy to all sorts of learners.

21. Does the training relate to your business?

Completely. I have also found some learners who are planning to start their own beauty parlours. Therefore, we connect very well and enjoy the classroom activities.

22. Was the trainer successful to hold your attention in the class? If yes, how?

I am always attentive in the class as it matches my area of interest. Even if I face any difficulty, the trainers are always there to help even beyond the class time.

23. 2/3 things that you like about the training?

Business games: there was this game where we had to work in groups to start our own businesses and execute

one-month plans. The game actually taught us about the difficulties that we might face in the long term. Our team came second in the game. Surely, we made some mistakes, which were corrected afterwards. As a result, we got to learn from each other's mistakes, which is certainly a great way of learning.

Video illustrations: we watched a video of 3 coffee shop owners, who were targeting the same set of customers where eventually only one survived in the long run mainly because of her promotion strategies. This is how we are learning different approaches of business through multimedia.

Group work: working in groups is fun at the same time a learning experience. We learn from each other's mistakes and the group discussions are very intriguing.

24. Things that you do not like?

I like everything about the module. However, I believe it would be better if we get more exposure to real environment. For instance, convincing real customers.

5. Feature Stories

In the media, a common type of feature is the profile feature that reveals an individual's character, struggles, and lifestyle. Another important type of feature is the human interest feature which discusses issues through the experiences of others. During my internship, one of my major responsibilities was to write features reflecting the beneficiaries' hardship and progress. The primary objective of these features was to reach out to donors and at the same time create awareness in the society.

While writing, I followed a few rules. Firstly, I kept in mind that feature stories are one of the forms of journalistic reports. As a result, I tried to cover topics in depth, keeping it as real as possible. Secondly, in the course- English for Print Media, I learned that feature stories are one of the forms of journalistic writing. As a result, I took extra time and made sure that my write-ups were always well researched. Putting my learning from the same course, I included three tools; background research, interview, and observation to my writing techniques. Notably, my feature stories were more descriptive than hard news stories. Moreover, rather than trying to concentrate on a few essential points, developing the subtle elements or details features enter further into their subjects.

In addition, instead of encapsulating the whole story in an inverted pyramid lead, I utilized my titles and opening paragraphs to grab readers' attention. Through my words, I formed a relationship with my readers. I believe, by offering the most intriguing information (for example, intricate details of the lives of the trans genders), an author can touch the nerve of his/her readers. By portraying an accurate picture of the subjects, I came up with features that were highly thought provoking.

Sometimes I used words and metaphors which were beautiful, but hardly contributed to the stories. In the process, my supervisor introduced me to a technique called “killing your babies”. According to the technique, it is alright to cut down beautiful words to maintain the core of the story. It also means that in a feature the focus should be on the story, not the words. To reach a reader’s heart, a feature should contain basic words that are understandable because it is all about the depth and depth comes from understanding.

During my internship with BRAC Skills Development Programme, I wrote features on child marriage victims, young widows, transgender, unemployed men, and struggles of entrepreneurs. One of them (a feature on a person with disability) is given below:

Shormila: The Unconventional



Shormila (17), BRAC SDP STAR

The 17-year- old Shormila from Dhaka belongs to the world’s largest minority group. She was just 8 when the accident happened. It was the day

her life changed. She recalls, “I was in the second grade when my teacher slapped me hard across my face. Shormila developed high fever the

next day, and became deaf. “My family knew there was treatment out there for me, but we didn’t have the money.”

More than a billion people globally- around 10 per cent of world’s population- have some form of disability. Poverty and disability go hand in hand. Inclusion of people with disability at work place is a rare instance in Bangladesh. As a result, “amongst people living under the poverty line, every fifth person has a disability” –World Bank.

Approximately 80 per cent of people with disabilities are unemployed in Bangladesh.

Today, Shormila tailors men's clothing, which is not a traditional role for women in Bangladesh. All it took for her was an artificial hearing device, which was given by BRAC during the 6-month training program.

"Because my family needs me, my new device gives me the feeling I can achieve anything", Shormila asserts. Her trainer proudly shares, "She concentrates and works very quick, and tailors trousers, which are considered as 'excellent' by our customers. She has a real talent".

Shormila considers herself lucky and is looking forward to a beaming future with her own little shop.

I will save money and contribute to my siblings training." The future entrepreneur smiles an incredibly winning smile.

6. Translations

During my internship with BRAC Skills Development Programme, one of my major responsibilities was to translate case stories. As an NGO, BRAC works with people at the grass root level and deals with foreign diplomats and funders. So the case stories were developed both in English and Bangla.

Here, I should mention that my supervisor is from Germany and cannot read Bangla. As a result, first I used to collect raw data in Bangla. Following those data, I used to develop case stories in English. After the stories were finalized by my supervisor, I used to translate them into Bangla. The first thing to remember here is that translation is the transfer of meaning from one language to another. It is not the transfer of words from language to language. Rather than word-for-word, the meaning of what is being said must be translated.

In this case, I followed four steps. They are:

1. I read the whole of the source story thoroughly from the beginning to the end, to make sure that I can understand it. I clarified the words that I did not understand at first and the words that I did not need to translate to keep the meaning intact after translation.
2. I did a first draft translation, trying to translate all the source materials, without translating word-for-word. Thus, I used to prepare initial draft stories in the target language.
3. Next, I used to go back over the whole of my draft translation and polish it without looking at the source, making sure that the translation reads well in the target language.
4. Finally, I compared the final version of the translation with the source original to make sure that I had incorporated all the information and translated it accurately.

Following is a sample of one of the translated (English-Bangla) stories, covering the lives of trans genders in Dhaka.



BRAC

Mar 13 at 6:30pm · 🌐

“সমাজ বা সরকার কখনোই আমাদের কথা ভাবে নি। তাই যুগ যুগ ধরে এই চাঁদার উপর ভরসা করেই আমরা বেঁচে আছি। আমাদের মতে, আমরা স্বাভাবিক এবং আমাদের অনুভূতিগুলোও স্বাভাবিক। আমরা কেবল এখন নিজেদেরকে প্রমাণ করার একটি সুযোগ চাই। বোঝা হতে চাই না।”

আঁখির বয়স যখন ১৪ তখন সে এস এস সি পরীক্ষা দেয়। কিন্তু ফলাফল হাতে আসবার আগেই তার বাবা মা তাকে শনির আখড়ার হিজড়া পল্লিতে রেখে আসে। সেখানে এক হিজড়া দলের সাথেই এলাকার দোকান থেকে চাঁদা তুলে নিজের খরচ চালাতেন তিনি। ছোটবেলা থেকেই আঁখি বেশ উচ্চাকাঙ্ক্ষী, তাই ব্র্যাক এর টেইলরিং কোর্সটা সে আর হাতছাড়া করেনি এবং ট্রেনিং শেষ করে তার ট্রেনার এর দোকানেই চাকরি নেয়। আঁখির ইচ্ছা কিছুটা আর্থিক সহযোগিতা পেলেই, সে নিজেই দর্জির দোকান দেবে।

যদিও ২০১৩ সালে হিজড়াদের বাংলাদেশী আইনে ‘তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের’ স্বীকৃতি দেয়া হয় এখনও মোট হিজড়া সংখ্যা সঠিকভাবে জানা যায় নি। ধারণা করা হয় এই সংখ্যা ১০,০০০ এর ও বেশি।

7. Fact Sheet Contents

The fact sheet is a piece of paper giving useful information about a particular issue. It is distributed for publicity purposes. It is often used in various organizations to gain the attention of the targeted crowd. The point of a fact sheet is to get the reader to do something. When it comes to BRAC Skills Development Programme, fact sheets are often used to gain donors' attention, and they are mostly written in English. These fact sheets are often distributed in skills development fairs, where donors from home and abroad and beneficiary organizations are invited.

All the fact sheets were one pager and colourful making it handy at the same time captivating. The colour combinations were done following the organization's branding guideline (7.1).

Irrelevant information in fact sheets can cause the risk of losing readers' attention. Additionally, more information than you need to convince them is a waste of the reader's time. Therefore, I kept the text brief and to the point.

Colours (Pantone, CMYK and RGB code)

Primary Colour

Pantone Magenta			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	0	R	209
Magenta	100	G	0
Yellow	0	B	116
Black	0		

Our core colour is magenta and the chosen magenta is at 100%

Secondary Colours

Pantone 7405C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	0	R	236
Magenta	11	G	194
Yellow	97	B	0
Black	2		

Pantone 298C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	67	R	61
Magenta	2	G	183
Yellow	0	B	228
Black	0		

Pantone 137C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	0	R	255
Magenta	46	G	161
Yellow	100	B	0
Black	0		

Pantone 3298C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	100	R	0
Magenta	0	G	113
Yellow	57	B	97
Black	42		

Pantone 381C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	20	R	201
Magenta	0	G	214
Yellow	91	B	0
Black	0		

Pantone 235C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	5	R	151
Magenta	100	G	0
Yellow	0	B	94
Black	40		

Pantone 2593C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	67	R	128
Magenta	92	G	55
Yellow	0	B	155
Black	0		

Pantone Cool Gray11C			
Process system		RGB system	
Cyan	0	R	77
Magenta	2	G	79
Yellow	0	B	83
Black	68		

7.1 Color codes, a part of the Brand Guideline.

The first paragraph of a fact sheet is a significant part. It is used to grab readers' attention. For this reason, in the first paragraphs of the factsheets, I tried to state the burning

issues such as $\frac{1}{3}$ of Bangladesh's population is 10-24 years old and what a, but 41% of young people aged 15 to 24 are not in employment, education or training". To be more specific, I incorporated bullet points. This format kept the information clear, focused and easy on eyes.

Moreover, I included some fascinating statistics regarding the challenges and the organization's impacts to convey my message. For example, the impact section of the fact sheet says "8,900 youth equipped with skills" and "95% are employed after graduation". To add emphasis, these numbers were written in bold and colorful strokes.

A fact sheet must be self-contained. As a result, I did not refer to any previous documents or assume that the readers remember the information. I added a paragraph briefly discussing BRAC's history and its achievements. To make the content more lively and alluring, I comprised beneficiaries' success stories. At the bottom of the fact sheet, I mentioned all the tools such as telephone number and office addresses that were needed to take action. To give references for more information, I entered the organization's web address as well. To illustrate my effort, I have attached both sides (7.2, 7.3) of fact sheet that I composed during the internship period.

SKILLS TRAINING for ADVANCING RESOURCES STAR

Both young people and businesses in Bangladesh are facing a skills crisis: 2 million young people enter the workforce every year but 70% of business leaders claim that skilled workers are scarce.

Half of the population are illiterate or semi-literate, and most young people end up with insecure, informal jobs. 70% of Bangladesh's workforce is employed in the informal sector.

Skilling Bangladesh's youth will unlock the potential of future generations and create opportunities for better jobs. In parallel, working with employers to improve the quality of jobs will ensure that people are able to access decent work opportunities in the informal sector.

INNOVATING ON TRADITION: SKILLS THAT LEADS TO JOBS

The Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR) project is an on-the-job apprenticeship model that delivers the skills that employers need in the shortest timeframe possible. Apprentices are paired and partnered with master crafts people who run their own businesses and have been trained on competency based training techniques.

WHY IT WORKS

- Fast and effective:** Learners are work-ready in less than six months through a combination of theoretical and on-the-job training.
- Credible:** Skills are aligned with the new National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework, ensuring all learners can get nationally certified.
- Trains essential capabilities:** Specific terminologies, practical skills and basic English conversation skills are included.
- Soft skills:** Entrepreneurship, rights and social issues, labour rights, gender equality and financial literacy are discussed.
- Socially responsible and inclusive:** Employers are supported to meet BRAC-promoted work standards, and orphans, children of sex workers and ethnic minorities are included.
- Demands covered:** Trains are selected based on local market demands and all trainees are connected with job opportunities.

CHALLENGES

- 1/3 of Bangladesh's population is 16-24 years old but 41% of young people aged 15 to 24 are not in employment, education or training.

OUR IMPACT

- 18,900 young people equipped with skills
- 95% are employed after graduation.
- Their income increases 8 times
- Every \$1 invested in STAR returns \$3

7.2 Front side of BRAC STAR fact sheet.

WHERE WE WORK

- Algeria
- Armenia
- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Chad
- China
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- Zambia

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Chad
- China
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- Zambia



Programme area (2015 to present)

BRAC: THE WORLD'S BIGGEST FAMILY

We are the largest development organisation in the world, operating in 35 countries across Asia and Africa. We act as a catalyst, creating opportunities for people living in poverty to realise their potential to transform their own lives.

We specialise in taking an idea, testing it, perfecting it and then scaling it up rapidly in a cost-efficient manner without compromising quality. We stand out from others not just for the scale and range of our work, but because of our relentless drive to innovate and correct our own errors.

We work like a business, but instead of maximising profit, we maximise gains in quality of life for all.






CAN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORK?

Abdus Sobhan's life stopped in 2008. He was working with his father on their farm when their plow power broke his foot, and did so much damage that he ended up losing his leg. His relatives helped to cover his medical expenses, but he could not continue his education or find a job.

In Bangladesh, approximately 80 per cent of persons with disabilities are unemployed. For most employers it is a fact that disabled people cannot work. This belief is costing the country billions of dollars each year. International Labour Organisation studies show that the economic loss when people with disabilities are excluded from the job market can up to 7 per cent of GDP.

For some, simple solutions can make all the difference. In 2018, Abdus started an apprenticeship as a tailor. His trainer Tacheema helped him to get his self-confidence back, through teaching him how to run a business. BRAC helped him with the next step just before his 18th birthday, financing an artificial limb. Now Abdus can walk alone, and is well on his way to showing the world that he can be an independent businessman.

10% of our learners are people with disabilities.



Skills development is an urgent need in Bangladesh, because of the high number of unemployed young people and our increasing dependence on skilled manpower from neighbouring countries.

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed

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BRAC is a registered charity in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and the United Kingdom.

7.3 Back part of BRAC STAR fact sheet.

8. Operating Social Media

Research conducted by Parse.ly, a technology company that provides web analytics and content optimization software for online publishers, shows that the life expectancy of a story posted on the web is 2.6 days, contrasted with 3.2 days when a story is shared via social media. That is a distinction of 23%, which is noteworthy when you take it into consideration that billions of individuals use the web everyday. This implies that the longer the content is circulated, the more discourse it creates leaving a greater impact on social media.

NGO Technology Report states NGOs concur that web-based social networking becomes a powerful tool when it comes to online branding, making social change, enlisting volunteers, and boosting fundraising through online activities. However, a fruitful online networking campaign does not work by itself; it requires system, arranging and a devoted attempt.

Though initially, I doubted its worth, after pursuing the internship, now I can say that social media has both positive and negative sides. However, regarding raising awareness, the brighter side of the social media is much wider than the darker side.

A fascinating study by *The New York Times* Consumer Insight Group revealed the motivations that participants cited for sharing information on social media and two of the motivations were getting the information about brands and causes they like or support. Maryanne Gaitho in his article titled, “What is the Real Impact of Social Media?,” mentioned that 84% people join social media to support a cause they strongly feel about and 69% to participate and feel involved in things happening in the world. These elements have signified the social networks’ worth, from being a convenient means for staying in touch with loved ones to being utilized as a tool that creates an impact on the society. Thus, being active on social media like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest has become a ‘popular culture’, a concept I came across while

taking the course, ENG 331: Cultural Studies: Theory And Practice. In his book *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, John Storey defines popular culture as the “signifying practices.” (2)

Beth Kanter, Nonprofit Consultant and Author of Beth’s Blog, one of the longest running and most popular blogs about nonprofits and social media asserts, “Social media shouldn’t be out there alone; it should be integrated and aligned with your strategic goals and target audiences.”

An organization’s social goals should always be clear. Being the world’s largest NGO, BRAC has always had a mission, and the mission highly depends on social media. The social media supports the mission in terms of community engagement, education, brand building, reputation management, program recruitment, and fundraising. To put it another way, all BRAC employees are always active on Facebook@work, this version of Facebook enables a big organization like BRAC to always stay connected. The employees can post their work related updates (8.1) to gain more inform and encourage others.



8.1 A work update on Facebook@work.

During my internship with BRAC SDP, I developed a good number of contents for social media such as Facebook. In the process, I learned that one of the most significant trends in social marketing is storytelling. By building an immediate rapport with the audience, storytelling can bring the organization's mission to life. Keeping up with the trend, the Facebook contents I

prepared were kept short and catchy. Moreover, along with my supervisor, I created a board on Pinterest named “Deshi Skills.” The board contains some high-quality pictures of BRAC beneficiaries paving their way to success. Visual content can often trigger the emotion of the audience that words alone cannot. Keeping this in mind, I also created infographics with illustrators like Photoshop and InDesign. Infographics are visual images used to represent information or data. Following are a Facebook post (8.2) and an infographic (8.3) sample that I created for social media.



8.2 Story of a BRAC beneficiary posted on Facebook.

brac

Bangladesh continues to have the highest rate of **marriage involving girls under 15**

18% of girls are married **by their 15th birthday**

Our Skills Training for Advancing Resources **reduces early marriage by 62%**

#BeBoldForChange
#IWD2017

8.3 An infographic stating the current scenario of early marriage in Bangladesh.

9. Editing

ENG 401: Editing is the first course that I took from my area of concentration (Media and Cultural studies). At first I thought of editing as a mere process of correcting grammatical errors and eliminating redundancy. However, the course allowed me to explore the broader concept of editing.

Editing is the most efficient method to sharpen, trim, and transform clumsy words and phrases into a reasonable, compact message that appeals the target audience. It can be a PowerPoint presentation, an email, a feature story, a Facebook caption or a report—yet regardless of the medium, editing always proves to be useful.

Before interning at BRAC SDP, I had little hands on experience in editing. As a non-profit organization, BRAC addresses various distinctive target groups ranging from struggling beneficiaries to foreign donors, and during my internship I learned how to alter articles and messages according to the target groups. As it is a broad area, the editing related tasks that I accomplished during my internship can be divided into the following segments:

Proofreading: Though the term Proofreading is often confused with Editing, ideally it is the final stage of editing. The process focuses only on the surface errors such as mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

During the initial days of my internship, one of my key responsibilities was to gather stories from the field workers such as Project Officers. They used to send me beneficiaries' success stories via emails. Along with maintaining the projects, writing these case stories was

an additional task to them. As a result, the stories were full of errors and lack of coherence. However, two of the most common errors were dangling modifiers and attribution.

A dangling modifier is a word or phrase that modifies a word not clearly stated in the sentence. Sometimes these errors in writing cause confusion in readers' minds. Thus, they fail to convey actual messages. To illustrate,

Walking through the trails of the brothels, the sturdy-eyed pimps frightened the little girl.

Edited: Walking through the trails of the brothels, the little girl was frightened by the sturdy-eyed pimps.

Correspondingly, attribution in a sentence names who provided information or made a statement. Faulty attribution can incorrectly suggest how people feel about things. I used to fix these errors by checking the contexts of the stories. For example,

Ayesha admitted she was happy with the job.

Edited: Ayesha proudly asserted that she was happy with the job.

Formatting Fact Sheets: During the internship, I prepared contents for four fact sheets. Likewise, I was always involved in the process of designing. Before laying out a page, I used to look at pictures and graphics that were available. At the initial stage of design, I used to determine the basic shape of the image and the size it would need to be to convey the message. While preparing a fact sheet for the project STAR (9.1), I was instructed to take a photo that could be zoomed in to fit the space of the fact sheet. Following the instruction I took photos, however, taking the learning from the Editing course, even as a beginner I did not squeeze or stretch them as it might cause a distorted image.



9.1 Fact sheet for BRAC STAR.

Moreover, the use of colours in a fact sheet is a must. It makes the piece of paper interesting and catchy. The use of colours in a text can also help direct readers' eyes. For every fact sheet I took only one colour to highlight the CHALLENGES and a different one to convey the OUR IMPACT (9.1).

Along with proofreading and formatting fact sheets, while writing articles, I always had to keep an eye on the style and tone of the story. Following my supervisor's instructions, I also

wrote different articles on the same person or subject with varying perspectives and messages to convey. For instance, at the beginning of the internship, I wrote a case story featuring a young widow; later on according to my supervisor's instructions I edited the story and changed it into a story of a child marriage victim. On the occasion of Women's Day, I was asked to take the same story and change it to an inspiring one. I edited the story; changed the tone and style and prepared a new article introducing a young girl paving her way to success. Thus, I learned that the tone of a write-up should always merge with its theme and editing the writing style and tone of a story can entirely change its focal point.

Another important thing I learnt is that an editor should always go for contents that are relevant and will feed the theme of the article. In my write-ups, I tried to keep the paragraphs short making them easy for the readers to grasp. I reduced each sentence to its essential parts, and avoided over use of subordinate clauses and weak adjectives like- very'. In the final revision, I always looked at my articles from a reader's point of view. This technique immediately showed me the irrelevant information along with the redundancy in write-ups.

Editing is a tough skill to exhibit, but it is one that can only help one's career, even if she or he is not part of the media or communications sector.

10. Knowledge Management

We all are familiar with the maxim ‘knowledge is power’; however, nowadays, it is not only power, but it can also be utilized within an organization to foster innovation.

Unlike a physical office space with employees working face-to-face and through email during set hours between 9 am to 5 pm, at BRAC SDP it is the norm for employees to be working across multiple locations, hours and devices; As a result, the workforce is no longer confined to a single office environment. Therefore, a Knowledge Management unit is a necessity at BRAC SDP.

The Knowledge Management team at BRAC SDP elevates coordinated approaches to deal with retrieving, assessing, processing, and sharing all of its information resources. These resources include databases, records, strategies, methodologies, and previously un-captured capacity of the workforce.

Being a part of the Knowledge Management team, one of my primary responsibilities was to record projects’ progress. The task included keeping track of performances of every project and its people. Each month, taking appointments and sitting with every colleague, recording their activities and deadlines, sorting out documents appeared to be tiring at first. However, its worth struck me when I needed to get back to them for content writing.

This kind of data management also facilitates the organization’s decision-making process. Moreover, employees can have access to all relevant information whenever needed. Vital information is kept inside the business even after staff and beneficiaries move on from the organization. It puts the existing expertise in proper use. Additionally, in the management process, I developed competence in using various task managing software like TaroWorks and Trello.

One of the keys to BRAC SDP's success is data, which allows it to map the effectiveness of its operations consistently. This year BRAC SDP significantly invested in improving that through a real-time business intelligence strategy.

The solution allows the management team at the head office to track the progress of young people, master craftspeople who offer apprenticeships, as well as entrepreneurs and institutions where graduates are placed. The knowledge management team has comprehensive performance metrics for all groups, which demand constant and rigorous follow-up and support. The strategy is being used across all 43 districts that STAR (BRAC SDP's dual apprenticeship model) operates in.

11. Professional Etiquettes

An internship can serve the purpose of a resume builder and provide a scoop of networking opportunities. Most importantly it equips a student with the real world experiences. Joining BRAC SDP as an intern gave me the opportunity to work hands on in a professional environment. The internship has given me relevant knowledge, skills, and experience while establishing important connections in the field. Not to mention, learning office etiquettes was one of its highlights.

During the initial couple of days of my internship, I used to casually observe my coworkers. The focus was to figure out what was viewed as sensible conduct, and what was not. Besides, my supervisor was always there to clarify my confusion.

There is a particular rundown of rules and regulations in every association that guarantees unhampered work process. BRAC SDP has some unwritten dos and don'ts regarding its work environment. In the office where everyone is bustling with their share of chores, it is considered disrespectful to just go up to someone and ask for work to be done. Similarly, babbling out a task list or scribbling them on a post-it, and anticipating that the person will finish the work is intrusive.

One cannot talk on the phone or listen to music without headphones, while in the workplace. Thus, securely plugged in earphones or headphones are imperatives as loud music might distract the office acquaintances. One of the brass-bound rules of BRAC SDP is to turn off the monitor before leaving the premises. It took me a while to put it in practice, but I got a good hold of it once I realized its effectiveness.

Sometimes tasks called for earlier or later hours; I was always fine with adjusting my schedule accordingly. Certainly, it showed my dedication to the job. Last but not the least, the

internship taught me to respect my fellow workers and help them with a smile whenever required. Now I believe that having a positive attitude towards work significantly affects the performance and I will apply the same learning when I do my Masters.

12. Special Achievements

–Outside the comfort zone, there is a growing zone.”

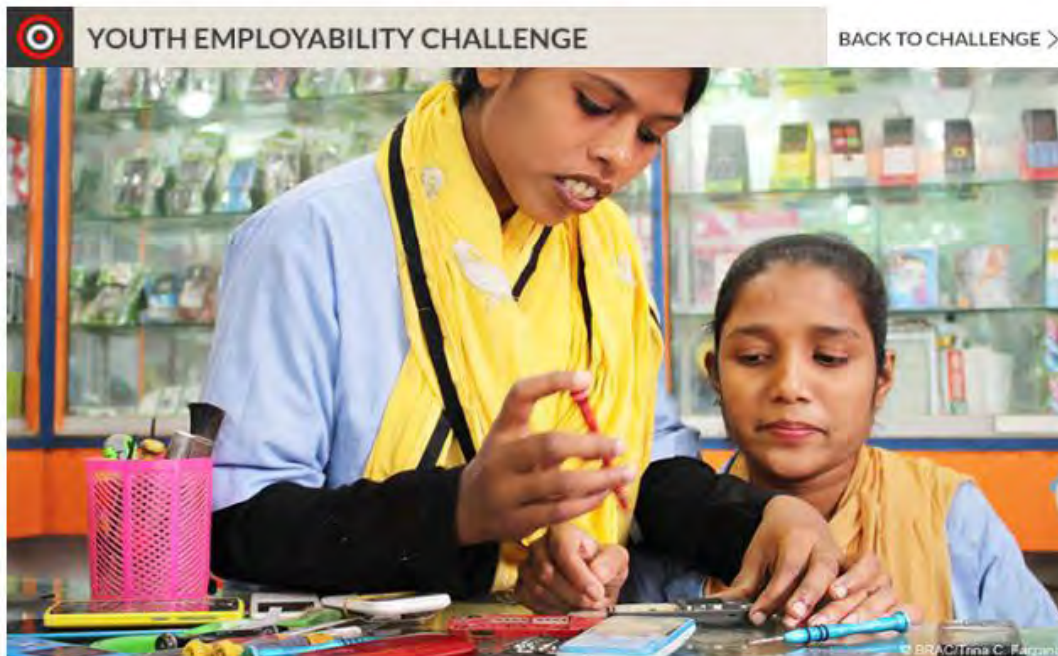
The process of taking a chance and stepping out of the comfort zone is the best way to learn and grow as a person. As an intern at BRAC SDP, I was fortunate enough to get opportunities to try out various tasks; tasks that I had never tried before. Eventually, with the guidance of my supervisor and the encouragement of my coworkers at BRAC SDP, I accomplished them with pats of appreciations on my shoulders.

Certainly, it was a journey of self-exploration. I always had an obsession with photography which instantly caught my supervisor’s eye. As a result, she decided to send me on a photography assignment. Though I was not sure about my worth as a photographer, my supervisor saw the potential in me. I went to Jatrabari where two female BRAC beneficiaries



BRAC Case study on Youth Employability: Solving Bangladesh’s Skills Shortage Through Apprenticeships

Posted by [member](#) on March 15, 2017 at 13:00 [View Blog](#)



BRAC Case study on Youth Employability

12.1 Business Fights Poverty published the article featuring a picture taken by me.

were running a mobile repairing shop. I spent a whole day with them, and in the afternoon I returned to the office with photos that everyone liked. One of the photos has been used in an article on an international website (Business Fights Poverty) with my name as a photographer on it (12.1).

Besides being appreciated for my photography expertise, I have also received a certificate from BRAC which has added value to and signifies my internship experience at both personal and educational levels. It best symbolizes what I have learned and earned amid the three-month internship period. A copy of the original certificate (12.2) is attached in the next page.



Internship Certificate

Dhaka, 24th of May 2017

This is to certify that Ms. Farzana Chowdhury Trina, born on October 8, 1994, in Barisal (Bangladesh), worked with BRAC's Skills Development Programme (SDP) at the head office in Dhaka, from January 18, 2017 until April 30, 2017. During her internship, she has assisted the program's knowledge management, communications and fundraising unit.

Main tasks completed:

Developed and translated write-ups and case stories in/from English and/to Bangla, e.g. for social media platforms and communication material for donors and partners; developed questionnaires and conducted qualitative interviews with SDP's clients, both face-to-face in the field as well as over the phone; composed articles on transgender people, persons with disabilities and early marriage issues; conducted research and accompanied field trips; drafted scripts for the official program website; designed material for internal and external communication using Photoshop and InDesign; took photos for documentation purposes and managed the photo stock of the SDP; assisted in the planning and execution of events.

Evaluation of intern's performance:

We can affirm that Ms. Trina adapts very quickly to new areas while working independently and effectively on new topics under varying circumstances with a remarkable sense of responsibility, great commitment towards her work, and an excellent capacity to handle and manage any challenges even under the pressure of time constraints. Ms. Trina was constantly sensible with the commissioned duties. Her ability to learn rapidly, combined with her practical skills, allowed her to always find the best solution for her work. We would like to underline that Ms. Trina has been punctual, disciplined and proactive throughout the whole internship period. She is a self-motivated person with a unique quality of blending in with people regardless of any differences. We have seen her having close interactions with her peers, subordinates and supervisors in a friendly and professional manner.

We wish her all the best for her professional and personal future.

Samira Lisa Syed
Knowledge Management & Fundraising Specialist
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Bangladesh under
The Societies
Registration Act of 1950

12.2 The internship certificate.

13. Conclusions

Working with BRAC Skills Development Programme has been an incredible experience for me. During the internship period I encountered the uses of my classroom learning in a real life setting. My learning was not restricted to rehearsing the rules of creative writing; I have also learned various approaches of dealing with people in a formal manner. Besides being introduced to the field's culture and etiquette, I also accumulated new skills such as gaining expertise in different online and offline softwares like Trello, TaroWorks, Adobe Photoshop and InDesign.

In particular, I have gained a real world perspective on an occupation- Communication Specialist. In this case, a few of the important requirements were to come up with different ideas of storytelling and start working on them if approved. Meeting the deadlines for the submission of the stories was a challenge for me. Assuming the liability, understanding the weight of it and working accordingly is, therefore, the best learning taken from this internship.

As can be seen, the internship with BRAC Skills Development Program has not only contributed to my interest towards writing about the unsung heroes of our society, but it has also made me more insightful as a person. It has been an honor to be a part of BRAC Skills Development Programme.

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