

## **National Workshop held on "Ecosystem Services and Poverty Alleviation Study in South Asia" (ESPASSA)**

BRAC in association with IUCN Bangladesh organized a day-long workshop on "Ecosystem Services and Poverty Alleviation Study in South Asia" (ESPASSA) at BRAC Centre on 17 December 2007. As a member of an international consortium, BRAC is currently preparing a Situation Analysis to provide a synthesis of information on the current status of and challenges to the ecosystem services that are most important to the well-being of the poor of this country. The research team for BRAC is being led by Dr. Mahabub Hossain, Executive Director of BRAC and the team members are Dr. Moushumi Chaudhury and Kazi Faisal Bin Seraj from the BRAC Research and Evaluation Division.

## **Project on post-partum maternal depression in collaboration with KI Sweden begins**

RED will launch a 3 year project on post-partum maternal depression in collaboration with KI Sweden in 2008. Data collection will begin in February 2008. The project aims to see the impact of post-partum maternal depressive symptoms on child health and development in rural Bangladesh.

## **Study on impact of false tsunami warning completed**

The study aims to look at household responses to a false tsunami warning in coastal areas of Bangladesh that took place on 12 September, 2007. This study, conducted among 1800 households, in different areas of Cox's Bazaar district, to see the impact of false warnings by measuring the effectiveness of the warning, reasons behind evacuation or the failure to do so, experience of evacuating and staying in shelters, and loss in assets. The study also examined whether evacuees will trust future warnings.

## **Malaria Baseline Survey in Bangladesh 2007 Completed**

RED has completed a collaborative research project on Malaria with ICDDR,B. As part of this a baseline survey was conducted in 13 malaria endemic districts of Bangladesh. The survey assemble data related to malaria, health and hygiene awareness and socio-economic status to help formulate appropriate strategies for programme interventions. Data collection is completed. A draft report is expected by the end of March 2008.

## **Mapping the Health Workforce in Bangladesh Study completed**

RED has conducted a survey on "Mapping the Health Workforce in Bangladesh" under "Bangladesh Health Watch Study 2007". This study aims to do a situation analysis of the healthcare providers. The study was conducted in 60 unions/wards both in urban and rural areas. The draft report has been circulated for comments and feedbacks. The study report is expected to be launched at national level by the end of February 2008.

## **Study on Human Rights and Legal Education**

RED has initiated a study on Human Rights and Legal Education (HRLE) of BRAC's Human Rights and Legal Service Programme (HRLS) with the purpose of making Human rights and Legal Education more effective. The study is projected in two steps. In the first step, RED team is acting to support the team of HRLS Programme to facilitate the quality and the process of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for tailoring the curriculum of HRLE class within a short but reasonable time. They will document the insights and the findings from FGDs within the middle of January.

## **BRAC-CDSP-III mid-term evaluation completed**

The study was undertaken to explore the socio-economic status of coastal char dwellers as a benchmark estimates for the BRAC-CDSP-III. A survey was carried out

on 795 household in July 2007 for this purpose.

## **Competency Test 2007 in Progress**

The fieldwork of two studies in order to evaluate the competency of pupils has been completed. Data analysis and report writing are in progress. One study assesses the competencies of Bangla and mathematics at primary level and the other evaluates the learning outcomes of BRAC primary graduates.

## **Studies on Indigenous Education Programme & PACE-MATH training programme initiated**

This is a comparative study using the data gained from two different regions. Study on PACE-Mathematics Training Programme will mainly focus on two aspects. One of them is to identify the challenges faced by PACE, and the other is to understand the impact of the training provided by the PACE.

## **BRAC-Plan Bangladesh Joint seminar held**

A seminar was jointly organized by Plan Bangladesh and RED on December 12, 2007 at Rangpur TARC to present the findings of the study titled, 'Primary School Culture of Bangladesh'. Samir Ranjan Nath, of RED and Amina Mahbub, of Plan Bangladesh presented the findings.

## **A preliminary draft report on Ultra poor initiative**

A preliminary draft report on "can the ultra poor be integrated with the regular microfinance groups?" has been completed and circulated for comments. This study compares the microfinance participation behaviors of the two groups of graduated STUP members in CFPR/TUPI—one group of members who were organized it and the other group of members who were attached to the existing VOs of regular microfinance programme. The preliminary report finds that separate VO members take more loans (in

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terms of frequency) from BRAC than the merged VO members. Compared to merged VO members, higher proportion of separate VO members has cash savings and access to cultivable lands.

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### **Study on Monga among the TUP members has been initiated**

A study on "can the TUP members cope up with Monga?" has been initiated to investigate whether CFPR/TUP I members in the Monga prone areas can cope up with the Monga. This study is based on primary data on 2,375 ultra poor households selected for the first cohort and 2,692 not selected ultra poor households. The survey was conducted in Rangpur, Kurigram and Nilphamari districts during October-November, 2008.

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### **RED starts Research for BRAC Africa**

#### **Microfinance survey in Tanzania completed**

A survey to assess the poverty outreach of BRAC-Tanzania's microfinance operations has been completed. A research preview has been prepared based on the data. We found that microfinance of BRAC Tanzania is mostly reaching the moderate poor. However, a general improvement in targeting in the last quarter has been observed.

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#### **A baseline survey for BRAC-Tanzania health programme initiated**

A baseline survey has been launched for impact evaluation of Community Health Promoter programme of BRAC Tanzania. The survey will also be used in identifying the gaps in health care behavior of Tanzanians to assist in programme designing.

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#### **A randomized evaluation of microfinance in Uganda initiated**

A research has been designed for impact evaluation of BRAC-Uganda's microfinance. The programme is going to identify 100 potential groups, from which 50 will be selected randomly for microfinance evaluation. The survey is planned to start in January. It is expected that the evaluation will be able to assess the impact both at household and at community level.

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### **Presentations at Workshop and Seminar**

M. Showkat Gani presented his MPH thesis titled 'Geographical and socioeconomic differences and determinants in knowledge and occurrence of sexually transmitted infections of adolescents in Bangladesh' to the MPH students of BRAC School of Public Health on 01 October 2007 at ICDDR,B premises.

Nasima Akter presented a paper titled 'BRAC's experience on medical waste management' in the Workshop on Medical Waste Management organized by Director General of Health Services of the GoB and WHO on 04 December 2007 in Dhaka

Goutam Roy and Notan C Dutta presented a paper titled 'Students learning performance in various types of BRAC schools' in the UNESCO-BAFED seminar held in Dhaka on 12 November 2007.

Rifat Afroze presented a paper titled 'English teachers classroom practices in rural secondary schools: an exploration of the effect of BRAC training' in the UNESCO-BAFED seminar held in Dhaka on 12 November 2007.

Samir R Nath attended in the ANTRIEP policy seminar titled 'Succeeding in a globalizing world: improving access to high quality secondary education' and participated in the annual meeting of ANTRIEP. The events were held in Jakarta on 6-9 November 2007. He gave a presentation on access, equity, quality and financing of secondary education in Bangladesh.

Samir R Nath presented a paper titled 'Access to preschool education in Bangladesh' in the second national ECD conference held in Dhaka on 11 December 2007.

Syed Masud Ahmed presented a paper on the story of the *Shasthya Sabikas* of BRAC at Second Asia-Pacific Action Alliance on Human Resources for Health held in Beijing, China from October 12 to 17, 2007. He also participated in an executive course on training of trainers held in Jaipur, India, at the Indian Institute of Health Management Research from December 1 to 6, 2007.

Nahleen Zahra presented a paper in a Regional Workshop on "Local Poverty reduction and MDG Localization: Good Practices and lessons Learned" organized by UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 29 to 31 October, 2007.

### **Congratulations**

AKM Masud Rana was awarded the 'ISOQOL New Investigator/Student Award' for his abstract entitled 'The impact of bone and joint diseases on health-related quality of life of elderly persons: a population-based cross-sectional study in rural Bangladesh.'

Marufa Aziz Khan, has been selected in MPH programme in JPG School of Public Health, BRAC university.

Kazi Faisal Bin Seraj has been selected as one of the eight recipient of the SIDA scholarship to attend two PhD level courses on Natural Resource Economics and Environmental Policy at Gothenburg University, Sweden to be held from 18 February to 25 April, 2008.

### **Recent Publications**

(Arranged alphabetically)

#### **Journal article**

Ip H, Hyder SMZ, Haseen F, Rahman M, Zlotkin SH. Improved adherence and anaemia cure rates with flexible administration of micronutrient Sprinkles: a new public health approach to anaemia control. *Euro J Clin Nutr* 2007; doi:10.1038/sj.ejcn.1602917.

Mallik BA, Huq Iftekharul, Rabbani M. Understanding exclusion – an analytical approach. *East West University Journal*; 2007; 1:93-104.

Nath SR and Sylva K. Children's access to pre-school education in Bangladesh. *Int J of early year's edu* 2007;18(3):275-95.

#### **Book chapters**

Ahmed SM. Combining health and social protection measures to reach the ultra poor: experiences of BRAC. In: Gehner M, Jupp S, Penea O (Editors). Global forum update on research for health volume 4: equitable access: research challenges for health in developing countries. London: Pro-Brook Publishing, 2007:34-9.

Matin I, Sulaiman M, Saleque MA. Imagining microfinance more boldly: unleashing the true potential of microfinance. What's wrong with microfinance. Dichter T and Harper M (Editors): Warwickshire, UK: Intermediate Technology Publication Limited, 2007: 23-34.

#### **Research Monograph Series**

Hossain N and Osman F. Politics and governance in the social sector in Bangladesh, 1991-2006, Dhaka: BRAC, 2007. vi, 53p. (Research monograph series no. 34)

Mahmud I and Zaman S. Transformation of tea labourers of Bangladesh: the case of *Painka* tea labourers – the followers of Kabir (In Bangla). Dhaka: BRAC, 2007. viii, 109p. (Research monograph series no. 33)

#### **CFPR working paper series**

Haseen F and Sulaiman M. How sustainable is the gain in food consumption of the CFPR/ TUP beneficiaries? Dhaka and Ottawa: BRAC and Aga Khan Foundation Canada, 2007. vi, 19p. (CFPR/TUP working paper series no. 18).

#### **Working papers (Other)**

Mortaza MG and Das NC. Foreign direct investment, trade liberalization and economic growth: empirical evidence from south Asia and implications for Bangladesh. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bank, 2007. p iii, 37. (Bangladesh Bank working paper series: WP 0712)

Naomi H. The politics of what works: the case of the vulnerable group development programme in Bangladesh, 2007. 20p: Chronic Poverty Research Centre, CPRC Working Paper 92.

#### **Newspaper articles**

Nath SR. Teachers should get priority in education related work. *Prothom Alo*, 25 Oct 2007.

Samadder M and Khan A. *Bhai amra kinto sonkhaloghu na* (In Bangla). *The Somokal*, 10 Oct 2007.

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