



RED Update

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Multi-country Study on Primary Health Care of Elderly Initiated

To improve the quality of life of elderly people in Bangladesh and Vietnam, a joint initiative was taken by RED, BRAC and Karolinska Institute, Sweden in October 2002. Three researchers from RED attended the first partners' workshop on Primary Health Care in Later Life Improving Services in Vietnam and Bangladesh (PHILL) held at Karolinska Institute, Sweden on 10-14 December 2002. The intervention package and the research framework were finalized in the workshop. The data collection tools will be finalized in a meeting of the representatives of the four countries involved (Sweden, UK, Vietnam, and Bangladesh) in January 2003 in Dhaka.

Education Watch Report 2001 Launched

The *Education Watch* report 2001 titled "Renewed hope daunting challenges: state of primary education in Bangladesh" was launched on 08 October 2002. This is the third report from the *Education Watch* initiative. RED has been involved with this initiative since its inception in 1998.

The current report enumerated the changes in some internal efficiency indicators of primary education over the last two years, private cost of schooling, and a note on the literacy situation in Bangladesh. Although primary education is said to be free of cost in Bangladesh it was reported that the parents were to pay more than half of the total costs. A wide variation also exists in private expenditure. It was found that the current adult literacy rate in the country is only 42.6% against the government claim of 66%.

The launching ceremony was chaired by ANM Eusuf, Chairperson of *Education Watch*, while ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milan, State Minister for Education attended as the special guest.

BRAC Received Dubai International Award for Best Practices

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and Dubai Municipality in the United Arab Emirates have selected BRAC for 'Dubai International Award for Best Practices' in 2002 for its outstanding contribution towards improving the living environment. A Technical Advisory Committee singled out BRAC's practices from more than 550 submissions worldwide in 2002. Best practices were analyzed to extract lessons that others can learn from and incorporate into their own work. Mohammad Rafi, Senior Research Sociologist of RED prepared the essay submitted to the committee for the award. The award includes a cash prize of US\$ 30,000 and a certificate. BRAC is one of the 10 such awardees of 2002.

IRRI-PETRA Sub-Project on SRI Launched

An action research programme on "Verification and refinement of the system of rice intensification (SRI) project in selected areas of Bangladesh" has been launched in October 2002. The project aims to improve the productivity of land, labour and water used in growing rice and thereby help increase food security of poor farmers. Two NGOs (SAFE and CARE) and a private organization (Syngenta) will work with BRAC as partners. BRAC will also coordinate all other SRI sub-projects in Bangladesh.

Study on Violence Against Women Initiated

RED has initiated a study on "Assessing male psychological attitude towards violence against women" sponsored by the UNFPA, Bangladesh. The study aims to investigate knowledge and feeling leading to the development of attitudes of the male towards psychological and physical violence. The findings will help design appropriate interventions, as well as identify the areas for further research. UNFPA has assigned an advisory panel consists of multi-disciplinary academicians for peer-reviewing and to support and guide the research. The study is being conducted in two villages of Mymensingh district. It is expected to be completed by March 2003.

Seminar on Health Inequities Held

Henry Perry, Director General and CEO, Hospital Albert Schweitzer of Haiti gave a seminar on "Inequities in health status: findings from urban Bangladesh and rural Haiti" on 15 December 2002 at BRAC University. The seminar was jointly hosted by the BRAC University and the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC.

Study on Kishori Supervisors Initiated

RED has initiated a study to examine the changes occurred in the lives of 'Kishori Supervisors' due to employment in BRAC Education Programme. The *Kishori* (adolescent) supervisors are BRAC graduates who are now studying in high schools or colleges. They are responsible for supervising the Reading

Centres of BRAC's Adolescent Development Programme. Each of them is suppose to supervise 6 Reading Centres per week giving at least 2 hours time to each. In turn, they get a remuneration of Tk. 500 per month. The draft report is expected in February 2003.

Study on BRAC Operated Community Schools in Progress

BRAC has been operating 45 government community schools in the rural areas of Bangladesh. A study is in progress to identify the students who did not pay the materials fees regularly, the reasons for non-payment, and to suggest measures to be taken to regularise the payment. Information was collected from the students, their guardians, the teachers, and the members of the School Management Committee as well as the community people. The draft report is expected soon.

A Quick Assessment of BRAC's Skill Training Programme for Retrenched Garment Workers

A quick assessment of the skill training programme for retrenched garment workers is almost done. In-depth interviews were conducted with the purposively selected 20 retrenched garment workers. The project documents were also reviewed. The training was said to be useful. The trainees wanted BRAC assistance in getting re-employed. They sought financial assistance from BRAC to start small business. The draft report is expected soon.

Professional/Academic Achievements

PhD Conferred

SM Ziauddin Hyder, Senior Research Nutritionist, obtained PhD in epidemiology and public health from the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine, Umeå University, Sweden. Congratulations to

Zia. His thesis was on "Anaemia and iron deficiency in women: impact of iron supplementation during pregnancy in rural Bangladesh."

Life Membership Awarded

Md. Jakariya, Environmental Researcher of RED was elected life member of the Clare Hall College of Cambridge University, UK. Congratulations to Jakariya. Previously he got his MPhil degree in Environmental Science from this college.

Re-elected as EPAB General Secretary

Hasan Shareef Ahmed, Chief of Editing and Publication of RED has been re-elected, for the consecutive fourth time, the general secretary of the Editing and Publication Association of Bangladesh (EPAB) for 2003-2004. Congratulations to Hasan Shareef.

Recent Publications

(Arranged alphabetically)

Journal articles, books and book chapters

Ahmed HS, Ullah AKMA, Chowdhury AMR. Taking research to non-researchers: the case of a research compendium of BRAC. *Bangladesh J Commun Publ* 2002 Jun;1(1):4-17.

Akter N, Hussain Z, Trankler J, Parkpian P. Hospital waste management and its probable health effect: a lesson learned from Bangladesh. *Indian J Environ Health* 2002;44(2):124-37.

Akter N. Scenario of hospital waste management in Bangladesh. In: Ahmed MF, Tanveer SA, Badruzzaman ABM (Editors). *Bangladesh Environment 2002 (Vol. 2)*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, 2002 Dec:674-89.

Banu D. The women who do not benefit: development interventions in rural Bangladesh. *Asian J Women Stud* 2002;18(1):96-115.

Chowdhury AMR. The impact of development interventions on health in Bangladesh. In: Rohde J, Wyon J (Editors). *Community-based health care: lessons from Bangladesh to Boston*. Boston: Management Sciences for Health, 2002:61-86.

Ekström E-C, Hyder SMZ, Chowdhury AMR, Chowdhury SA, Lönnerdal B, Habicht J-P, Persson LA. Efficacy and trial effectiveness of weekly and daily iron supplementation among pregnant women in rural Bangladesh: disentangling the issues. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2002;76:1392-1400.

Hossain MZ, Gani MS, Jakariya M, Chowdhury AMR. People do switch to arsenic-free water.

In: Ahmed MF, Tanveer SA, Badruzzaman ABM (Editors). *Bangladesh Environment 2002 (Vol 1)*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, 2002 Dec:274-82.

Hossain Z, Sharmin L, Rahman S. Use and handling practices of pesticide in hybrid vegetables and maize seed productions in Bangladesh: a case study of BRAC contract farmers. In: Herrman A, Schumann S. *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Environmental Risk Assessment of Pesticides and Integrated Pesticide Management in Developing Countries*, 6-9 Nov 2001, Kathmandu, Nepal. *Landschaftsökologie und Umweltforschung* 2002;38:49-61.

Hyder SMZ, Persson LÅ, Chowdhury AMR, Ekström E-C. Do side-effects reduce compliance to iron supplementation? a study of daily and weekly dose regimens in pregnancy. *J Health Pop Nutr* 2002;20(2):175-9.

Karim F, Rafi M. Drinking water in the hilly region of Bangladesh: how is the quality? *Water Resources Dev* 2002;18(3):439-52.

Naher F, Chowdhury AMR. To produce or not to produce: tackling the tobacco dilemma. Dhaka: BRAC, 2002 Oct. 32p. (Research monograph series no. 23)

Rafi M, Mallick D. Group dynamics in development of the poor: experience from BRAC. *Voluntas* 2002 Jun;13(2):165-78.

Editorials, executive summaries, letters, abstracts, and newsletter and newspaper articles

Ahmed HS. Launching a new journal in Bangladesh: is it necessary? (Editorial). *Bangladesh J Commun Publ* 2002 Jun;1(1):1-3.

Ahmed HS. The tickets of *Matir Mayna* in the hands of black-marketers (Letter) (In Bangla). *Prothom Alo*, 8 Nov 2002.

Akter S. Exploring the perception of different stakeholders regarding BRAC pre-primary schools. *Access* 2002 Jan;39:4-6.

Khan MKA. BRAC gonokendra pathagar: a new horizon for information services in rural areas. *Access* 2002 Apr;40:3-5.

Khan MKA. Perception of BRAC graduates studying in madrassas on some selected social and cultural issues: a comparative study (In Bangla). *Shetu* 2002;18(1):3-6.

Naher F, Chowdhury AMR. To produce or not to produce: tackling the tobacco dilemma in Bangladesh [Executive summary]. In: Efrogymson D (Editor). *Tobacco and poverty: observations from India and Bangladesh*. Ottawa: Path Canada, 2002 Oct:21-3.

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