



beneficiary and 1,983 non-beneficiary households. The data processing is underway. The study was initiated at the request of the government of Bangladesh. A baseline survey was conducted during October-November 2008. Using the two rounds of survey data the study will provide short-term impact assessment of the programme.

RED Retreat Held

The RED retreat was held on 13-14 May 2009 at BRAC TARC, Savar, which was opened by Dr. Mahabub Hossain, Executive Director, BRAC. The quality of research rather than the quantity was emphasized and various options to enhance RED's effectiveness were highlighted. It was also observed that the Division could make better contribution to BRAC programmes through increasing the number of impact assessment studies and programme-driven research. New ideas and suggestions were shared to improve RED's management structure. The process of preparing annual work plan was also discussed and finalized. Dr. SM Ziauddin Hyder, the new director of RED who joined on 03 May 2009, facilitated the retreat.

Research Review Committee and Research Advisory Committee Formed

Two new committees were formed to strengthen the capacity of RED – the Research Review Committee (RRC) and the Research Advisory Committee (RAC). Selected directors of different programmes of BRAC and directors of different institutes of BRAC University are the members of RRC. The tasks of RRC include: i) review of annual progress, ii) provide feedback to finalize annual work plan, iii) advice on new areas of research and potential partners for collaboration, and iv) advise on additional resource mobilization. Famous scientists and academics from around the globe consented to be on board as RAC members. The proposed members are: Dr. Abbas Bhuiya (Demography, ICDDR,B), Prof. Robin Bergess (Economics, London School of Economics), Dr. Richard A Cash (Research ethics, Harvard University), Dr. Mushtaque Chowdhury (Public Health, Rockefeller Foundation), Dr. Timothy G Evans (Health Systems, World Health Organization), Prof. Edward A Frongillo (Food security, University of South Carolina), Prof. Nazmul Haq (Education, University of Dhaka), Prof. David Hulme (Development economics, University of Manchester), Dr. Khalid Hasan (Market Research, AC Nielsen Bangladesh), Prof. Naila Kabeer (Gender, University of Sussex), Dr. Zarina Nahar Kabir (Social

development, Karolinska Institute), Prof. Lars-Åke Persson (Epidemiology, Uppsala University), Ms. Simeen Mahmud (Social science, BRAC University), Dr. Ferdousi Naher (Economics, University of Dhaka), Dr. Ainun Nishat (Environment, IUCN), and Prof. Pauline Rose (Education, University of Sussex). The tasks of RAC will be to: i) assist RED in defining research goals, ii) provide advice and contribute to the capacity development of young researchers, iii) review and provide feedback on annual work plans, progress reports, research reports and other dissemination products, iv) communicate research results to scientific community and other relevant stakeholders, v) provide advice on research methods and review data collection tools, and vi) participate in joint research activities.

Knowledge Management Unit Established

A Knowledge Management Unit (KMU) has been established to optimally gather, systematically manage, and make effective dissemination of knowledge generated. The previous Editing, Design and Publication Unit was reformed as KMU with more diversified and wider responsibilities. This Unit will organize dissemination workshops/seminars in collaboration with BRAC programmes aimed at translating knowledge to policy and practice.

Repeat Survey for 100-day EGP Impact Assessment Completed

Repeat survey for 100-day Employment Generation Programme impact assessment was completed. The survey was conducted in 45 *upazilas* of Bangladesh with 1,348

Second Round Survey of STUP I Baseline Completed

The second round survey of a sub-sample of the households interviewed in the STUP I (Specially targeted ultra poor) baseline was completed. The data processing is underway. Comprehensive baseline survey for STUP I evaluation was conducted in 2007, which will be repeated after two years (to be initiated in July 2009). However, a sub-sample of the STUP I baseline is surveyed every year to capture the impact of the programme with a short time period.

Health Research in Progress

Formative study on explanatory model of malaria begins

The study on 'Explanatory model of malaria' has been initiated to explore perception, knowledge, beliefs, and treatment-seeking practices regarding malaria. It also aims to know about the community acceptance and use of the treated bed nets (LLIN/ITN) distributed by the programme for daily use as a preventing measure. Qualitative data were collected from Dighinala *upazila* of Khagrachhari district, the most malaria endemic area in Bangladesh. Data compilation is going on. A draft report is expected by August 2009.

Impact evaluation of rural MNCH

Three consultants from Aberdeen University visited BRAC/RED in March to provide technical support in analyzing baseline data of 2008 of 'Impact Evaluation of Rural MNCH.' The baseline report is done. Preliminary findings were shared with the donors of MNCH (Maternal, neonatal and child health) programme, UNICEF, and Director General of Health, Govt. of Bangladesh.

Maternal perinatal depression project

Guest researcher Prof. Maigun Edhborg and Prof. Zarina Nahar Kabir of Karolinska Institute, Sweden visited Dhaka to review, supervise and provide technical support in analyzing data of the 'Maternal perinatal

depression project' in collaboration with Karolinska Institute (2008-2011). A new study has been initiated on supply side costing (cost of providing MNCH services) of MNCH area.

TB and nutrition study initiated

A study on tuberculosis and nutrition has been initiated recently. It aims to assess the nutritional status of newly diagnosed pulmonary tuberculosis patients under DOTS strategy in periurban Dhaka. Data collection will continue till April 2010.

Study on state of essential drugs done

The draft on 'State of essential drugs availability and use in the public and private sector PHC facilities in Bangladesh' has been submitted to the technical committee of Bangladesh Health Watch for review. It was found that, on an average, more drugs were being prescribed with less use of essential drug lists for prescribing. Generic prescribing was almost non-existing. Polypharmacy was alarmingly on increase including misuse and overuse of antibiotics, especially at the drug shops and urban clinics. Consulting time was inadequate for a proper history-taking and examination of the patient; dispensing time is too short for making any meaningful communication on the drugs being prescribed and dispensed, including side-effects.

Study on reading glass done

The draft report on 'Improving the quality of life of the presbyopic patients: the reading glass project of BRAC' has been completed. It was found that the majority of the people in the pilot project areas (two *upazilas*) were unaware about the facilities available for presbyopic care including that provided by BRAC. Less than half of them had desirable knowledge on its relationship with age and the fact that it can be corrected by a pair of spectacles. Around half of the presbyopic patients were currently using reading glasses and they were almost unanimous in stating that there had been improvement in their daily household and work-related activities. Their income also increased after using reading glasses.

Nutrition Research Update

Research contract signed with SickKids

A contract has been signed with the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) to conduct a randomized controlled trial to prevent linear growth faltering among low birth weight infants. Impact of a modified Sprinkles (with increased zinc) and water-based hand-disinfectant plus nutrition and hygiene education will be explored to accelerate growth, prevent infectious diseases and reduce anaemia. The study will support implementation of the Infant and Young Child Nutrition project of BRAC.

Research on 'Alive and Thrive' project initiated

Alive and Thrive is a multi-country project to improve infant and young child feeding practices. BRAC is implementing the community component of the project in Bangladesh to increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding by 50% (from 43 to 65%) among children aged 0-6 months and prevent stunting by 10% among children aged 6-24 months. RED is providing technical and research support to the project for better designing of implementation, fine-tune and strengthen intervention, provide continuous feedback, and document the implementation process.

Academic Attainment

Fazlul Karim, Senior Research Fellow has been conferred PhD in Medical Science from Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden. The title of his thesis is 'Gender matters: understanding of access barriers to community-based tuberculosis care in Bangladesh.' Congratulations to Dr Karim.

AKM Masud Rana, Research Associate has been conferred PhD in Epidemiologic Aging Research from Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden. The title of his thesis is 'The impact of health promotion on health in old age: results from community-based studies in rural Bangladesh.' Congratulations to Dr. Rana.

Paper Presentation

Narayan Chandra Das presented (co-presenter with Dr. Akhter Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI) a paper titled 'The impact of asset transfer on livelihoods of the ultra poor in Bangladesh' in a seminar organized by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies held in Dhaka on 27 May 2009.

Capacity Development

Rumana Ali, Tahmid Arif, Atia Rahman, Sarah Salahuddin, and Nazia Sharmin attended a month-long training course on SPSS and applied statistics organized by ISRT, Dhaka University in June 2009.

Rifat Afroze, Sabia Afroz and Nasima Akter attended a 5-day course on 'Quantitative research methods' organized by BRAC University Institute of Educational Development, Dhaka in late June 2009.

Narayan Chandra Das, Zeenatul Islam, Farzana A Misha and Wameq A Raza attended a training workshop on 'Stages of Progress Methodology' during 4-12 June 2009 in Mymensingh. This participatory method was developed to explain households' movement out of poverty. Dr. Anirudh Krishna of Duke University, USA and Dr. Mahesh Kapila of Livestock Assistant Training Institute, Udaipur, India conducted the training. This methodology is expected to be used for CFPR evaluation.

Recent Publications

(Arranged alphabetically)

Journal articles

Alim MA. Changes in villagers' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes concerning gender roles and relations in Bangladesh. *Dev Practice* 2009;19(3):300-10.

Rana AKMM, Wahlin A, Streatfield PK, Kabir ZN. Association of bone and joint diseases with health-related quality of life among older people: a population-based cross-sectional study in rural Bangladesh. *Ageing Soc* 2009;29:727-43.

Shakur YA, Choudhury N, Hyder SMZ, Zlotkin SH. Unexpectedly high early prevalence of anaemia in 6-month-old breast-fed infants in rural Bangladesh. *Public Health Nutr* 2009; doi:10.1017/S1368980009005886

Research monograph series

Ahmed AU, Rabbani M, Sulaiman M, Das NC. The impact of asset transfer on livelihoods of the ultra poor in Bangladesh. Dhaka and Washington D.C.: BRAC and International Food Policy Research Institute, 2009. vi, 56p. (Research monograph series no. 39)



Theses

Jalal CSB. Effects of BRAC's poverty reduction programme targeting the ultrapoor in rural Bangladesh (PhD thesis). New York: Cornell University, 2008.

Karim F. Gender matters: understanding of access barriers to community-based tuberculosis care in Bangladesh (PhD thesis). Stockholm: Karolinska Institute, 2009.

Rana AKMM. The impact of health promotion on health in old age: results from community-based studies in rural Bangladesh (PhD thesis). Stockholm: Karolinska Institute, 2009.

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