

Baseline Survey on Mainstreaming Nutrition Initiative in MNCH Programme for the scale-up regions

As the MNCH programme has been scaled up in 4 Districts (including the pilot district), a baseline survey was carried out during October–November 2008. A total of 4800 intervention and 2400 control households with under-5 and under-1 year children from six districts were included in the survey.

Follow-up Study on Mainstreaming Nutrition Initiative in MNCH Programme at Nilphamari

A follow-up study on MNI pilot initiative in six *Upazilas* of Nilphamari district was conducted during October 2008. Data from this study will be compared with the baseline data collected during February 2008 to examine on the performance of the pilot initiatives. Data analysis and reporting are underway.

An assessment of MANOSHI referral system in addressing the delays of emergency obstetric care

A study has been initiated to assess Manoshi referral system in four urban slums in Dhaka city on September 2008. The study will address delays of emergency obstetric care, factors related to delays, the role of delivery centres in facilitating or delaying referral by comparing with referral from community. Data collection procedure is underway. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques are adopted for the study.

Mapping of healthcare providers related to MNCH in rural areas: A qualitative investigation

Data collection on a formative study "Mapping of healthcare providers related to maternal, neonatal and child health in rural areas of Bangladesh: A qualitative investigation" has been completed. Data compilation, analysis and report writing are underway. Data collection for this study is completed. The study will map the different healthcare providers related to maternal, neonatal and child health in rural

Bangladesh. The draft report will be produced very shortly.

Launching of Rational Use of Drugs Study for BD Health Watch 2008

As part of studying health governance under BD Health Watch 2008, RED is going to study the rational use of drugs at grassroots following the WHO protocol. Proposal and tools have been developed during November 2008 and recruitment and training will soon start. The field work will occur during Jan-Feb 2009 and the first draft is scheduled to be ready by April 2009.

Integrating BRAC activities using GIS as a tool

The purpose of this exploratory study is to first collect geo-coded information for all the households and institutes at *Jahanpur* union of *Dhamuirhat* upazila. Based on these responses various GIS techniques will be utilized to map and carry out a spatial analysis of BRAC program to analyze the degree of BRAC's involvement with these households.

State of life after cyclone SIDR at Sharankhola

This study was conducted to assess the status of the cyclone SIDR-affected people through understanding the underlying factors associated with the risks and vulnerabilities of the community to this hazard. Study shows that most of the affected families were included in the rehabilitation programme taken by different development agencies and some of them were still suffering from acute psychological distress.

Study on Micro-Climatic variables using the data base of GoB-BRAC Weather Stations

This study will include time-series analysis of BMD weather data i.e. temperature, rainfall and humidity. It will assess the local level changes in the climatic variables and show how these affect the livelihoods pattern of local people and impact the land use, cropping pattern and vegetation at local level. Besides, a few comparative analyses will be conducted to explore change of climatic variables in the context of rural-urban,

global- local and between the agro-ecological zones.

Education Watch 2007 report launched

The eighth *Education Watch* report titled 'The state of secondary education: quality and equity challenges' was launched on 10 November 2008 at the LGED Auditorium, Agargaon, Dhaka. The issues addressed in this report were curriculum and learning achievement of current students and further education and employment opportunity of the graduates. Both general and madrasa streams were brought under investigation. A large degree of inequality in terms of school type, area, gender and socio-economic background of students was reported in this Watch.

Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Honourable Advisor, Ministry of Education and Commerce launched the report as the Chief Guest. The secretary of the Primary and Mass Education was the special guest. Chairperson of Education Watch Mr. Kazi Fazlur Rahman presided over the function. The report was jointly presented by Samir Ranjan Nath and AMR Chowdhury.

Inside Schools launched



A book title 'Inside Schools' on school culture in Bangladesh was launched on 23 November 2008 at the BRAC Centre Auditorium, Dhaka. The book was jointly written by Samir Ranjan Nath of BRAC and Amina Mahbub of

Plan Bangladesh after eight months long ethnographic investigation in four medium grade rural primary schools. Academic Press and Publishers Library (APPL) published the book.

Ms. Rasheda K Choudhury, Honourable Advisor, Ministries of Primary and Mass Education, Women Affairs and Cultural Affairs launched the book as the chief guest. The authors jointly presented the contents of the book and Professor Nazmul Hoque of IER, Dhaka University discussed on it. Mr. Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Chairperson of

Education Watch and Mr. Nazrul Islam Khan, Director General of Directorate of Primary Education spoke in the occasion as special guests.

Indigenous students lag behind their Bangali counterparts

A recent RED study on competencies achievement at the end of primary education in BRAC schools reported that the students under Education for Indigenous Children (EIC) did poorly compared to their counterparts in BRAC primary schools (BPS). Out of 27 competencies under test, the BPS students on average achieved 22.1 competencies and EIC students 20.2. Gender difference disfavoring the girls was more in EIC than BPS. The students of both types of schools performed well in knowledge level items than those requiring understanding level skills. The students of EIC schools with two-teachers did significantly better than those studied in single-teacher schools. The students were found relatively weaker in those competencies requiring writing skills. A number of competencies were identified where additional input is required.

Fieldwork of Education Watch 2008 Completed

The *Education Watch* 2008 revisits quality of primary education in the country. Two and a half months long fieldwork for this Watch has just been completed in the first week of December 2008. The activities included survey of 24,000 households from 960 villages/mahallahs, survey of 360 educational institutions, competencies achievement test of 7,200 students completing primary education and their socio-economic survey. One hundred and twelve Research Assistants and 12 Supervisors were involved in this.

The role of *Palli Shamaj* in 100-day employment generation programme

The aim of this study is to examine the role of *Palli shamaj* has in beneficiary selection for 100-day employment generation programme. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the study. The draft report is going to be submitted by December 2008.

Workshop Presentation

Syed Masud Ahmed presented a paper titled, "Using research for scaling up health programmes: BRAC experience" in the "International conference on scaling up: an essential strategy to attaining good health for all" at Rajendrapur, Dhaka, Bangladesh, on December 3-6, 2008.

Five research papers on Environment related issues of BRAC-RED have been accepted for presentation in the South Asia Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) III recently held at New Delhi, India. Technical and Documentation Sub-Committee of

SACOSAN III reviewed the papers covering diverse issues like gender and governance, sanitation and disaster, willingness to pay for improved sanitation services and sanitation technological options.

Nuzhat Choudhury attended "Realising Rights Writing Workshop" in Nairobi, Kenya from Nov 11-20, 2008. The workshop was with 3 days of training on academic writing skills, facilitated by senior researchers from a variety of disciplines related to sexual and reproductive health and rights and followed by a 7-day period for developing abstracts into a draft paper. The workshop was organized by African Population Health Research Centre (APHRC).

Goutom Roy, Morsheda Banu and Shumona Sharmin participated in a workshop titled "Working with children who have been exposed to emotional trauma" from 12-13 November, 2008. The workshop was facilitated by Deirdre Evans and Crissy George of IUBAT, and arranged by BRAC health program in collaboration with James P. Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University.

Training on Introduction to Geographic Information System

Training on "Introduction to GIS" was arranged by BRAC RED from 3 to 4 November, 2008 at BRAC University computer laboratory. Participants from BRAC RED and other BRAC programs were also attended the training course.

CFPR Update

CFPR 2 Quick Assessment Survey completed

This quick assessment study will assess the impact of the program by comparing old and new cohorts, focusing particularly on the effectiveness and sufficiency of the package for OTUP components of the CFPR.

Further Impact Analysis of CFPR

A draft report on CFPR-I further impact assessment study was completed and circulated for comments. The study was conducted in collaboration with International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Propensity score matching methodology was used to construct an appropriate comparison group forms the non-selected ultra poor households. Results show that participation in the CFPR played an important role in protecting and expanding the asset bases of ultra poor households, improving saving behavior, and increasing food expenditure and calorie intake.

First phase of ICT study completed

BRAC-RED in collaboration with Development research Network (DNet) completed the first phase of the longitudinal

study on "Impact of public access to Information and Technology". Information Ecology Mapping was conducted and a country background report on ICT was prepared during this phase. Major areas of impact assessment and detailed methodology were identified in this phase.

100-Day Employment Generation Program

This mixed method collaborative (i.e., BRAC-NSPCSP- GoB) study aims to provide baseline information of the participant households, evaluate implementation process, and assess targeting effectiveness of the project. The baseline survey of the project has been completed and data analysis is now in progress.

Recent Publications (Arranged alphabetically)

Journal articles

Afroze R, Kabir MM and Rahman A. English teachers' classroom practices in rural secondary schools: an exploration of the effect of BRAC training. *Bangladesh Education Journal*, 2008; 7(1): 7-16.

Ahmed SM (2008). Taking healthcare where the community is: the Story of the *shasthya sebikas* of BRAC in Bangladesh. *BRAC University Journal* 2008; V (1): 39-45.

Sulaiman M and Matin I. Community based change ranking to assess the impact of a programme for the ultra poor. *Journal of Multiple Research Approaches* 2008; 2 (2): 237-251

Books and book chapters

Nath SR & Mahbub A (2008). *Inside schools*. Dhaka: Academic Press and Publishers Library. pp. 165

Nath SR, Haq MN, Begum US, Ullah AMMA, Sattar MA & Chowdhury AMR (2008). *The state of secondary education: quality and equity challenges*. Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education. pp.210

Nath SR (2008). Quality of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee education programmes: a review of research studies. In CR Bagley & GK Verma (eds.) *Challenges for inclusion: educational and social studies from Britain and Indian sub-continent*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. pp. 183-218.

RED Working paper

Rafi SM, Nasreen HE, Rashid S. The Pilot Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Project (MNCH) at *Nilphamari*: Profiling the Chages During 2006-07. Dhaka: BRAC, 2008. 64 p.

Newspaper article

Nath SR. Secondary Education in Bangladesh. *ANTRIEP Newsletter* 2008; 12(2),13(1): 12-14.

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